

Coping with peripherality: local resilience between policies and practices. Editorial note.

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KEYWORDS: Regional resilience; Peripherality and peripheralization; Community agency; Local entrepreneurship; Tourism in peripheral areas

ABSTRACT

The aim of this Special Issue is to present examples of how territories and regions cope with peripherality, in both a top-down and a bottom-up perspective, particularly relying on case studies that highlight the role of local agency in the development strategies of peripheral areas. In doing so, it will consider the opportunities and the constraints of peripherality and peripheralization, and the ways in which they can possibly increase or hinder the ability of

peripheral areas to be resilient to structural change. Following a theoretical overview on the current debate on the policy implications of focusing the attention on local agency in relation to local development, this special issue will present some cases where efforts in dealing with peripherality and/or process of peripheralization are at stake. It will be evidenced that analyzing the spontaneous or induced (by a supra-local policy) local response is proving to be particularly challenging, as well as interesting, as it implies the application of the notion of resilience and all its theoretical (explanatory) and practical (policy) potential. The Editorial will conclude by providing suggestions for future directions in research and in policy making strategies aimed at overcoming the issues brought by processes of marginalization.

INTRODUCTION

Peripherality and peripheralization are not synonyms – the former is a condition the latter is a process – but they often go along. While talking about peripherality often involves considering attributes such as geographic remoteness, out-migration, population ageing and weak economies (see Pezzi & Urso, 2016), conceptualising peripheralization goes beyond persistent population decline and encompasses parallel socio-economic or political processes, such as political or economic dependency (Weck & Beißwenger, 2014). To date, what the actual potentials and limits of endogenous strategies to cope with peripheralization are is still a debated issue (Kühn, 2015). This entails investigating the constraints but also the opportunities of peripheral areas for dealing with peripherality overcoming or avoiding peripheralization. This means, in a word, looking at their resilience to structural change.

The search for new paths to resilience in these regions is an intriguing research topic, from a transdisciplinary and a policy-oriented perspective. Investigating how places adapt to these adverse, enduring conditions will help building knowledge in a broad range of fields of study providing insights on the diversity

and variety of this multifaceted process, by addressing questions of what kind of resilience these areas can cultivate and by investigating the role played by institutions in it (Pike, Dawley, & Tomaney, 2010).

Lacking of innovation and agentic capabilities – that is, the loss of agency of social actors and institutions (Beetz, 2008) – are considered as defining features of peripheralization processes.

As stated by Pfoer (2017, p. 12) “emphasising local agency in relation to peripheralisation processes thus should not mean to overemphasise or even romanticise the practices of the peripheral communities”, but rather to achieve a complex and grounded picture through which better interpret the efforts made by peripheral communities in resisting marginalization.

In this respect, it is worth noting that existing research has highlighted that some places have attempted to, and in some cases succeeded in, turn(ing) their peripherality into a resource (Ibidem).

An interesting question is therefore: do policies at all scales help these territories exert their agency, and if yes in what ways? And also, what visions of the present and future are presented in them?

The ambition of this Special Issue is to enrich the theoretical and empirical literature on these topics, proposing papers which can help shed light on development policies and practices in peripheral areas, unfolding further research avenues:

- practical methodologies to define and delimit peripheral areas and the policies addressing them;
- the implementation of essential services in peripheral areas as a driver for development;
- tourism trajectories in peripheral areas, heritage-making practices and local agency;
- entrepreneurship and agency in relation to local productions, agriculture and leisure.

Different community-level/led and policy reactions to peripherality or to the process of peripheralization are questioned and related to aspects of specific local settings within this special issue. They are also addressed in this editorial: section one deals with a theoretical overview of the current debate on the future pathways of peripheral

areas. Section two presents two fields in which the efforts of coping with peripherality and/or processes of peripheralization are at stake.

COPING WITH PERIPHERALITY IN THEORY

Large urban agglomerations have always been regarded by both scholars and policy-makers as the engines of economic development (World Bank, 2009). This belief has informed supranational and national policies within the European context during the last decades (Urso, 2016). Against this academic and policy interest in the nodes of today's globalized economy, the question of what happens to the areas "in-between" (Weck & Beißwenger, 2014) is increasingly pivotal by now. As the Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020 (Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020, 2011, p. 5) points out:

“ageing and depopulation will bring about changes in many regions including rural and peripheral regions and lead to severe impacts for social and territorial cohesion, public service provision, labour market and housing.”

It becomes apparent that due to economic downturn and demographic trends (with a progressive population decline) some places face significant challenges that pose particular threats to their future economic potential. To name but a few: limited access to services of general interest (coupled by a deterioration in their quality) and to job and education opportunities; migratory flows and more specifically a selective out-migration with young and qualified people moving to bigger cities; an over-representation of elder population groups, and accordingly the need for appropriate infrastructure and services (Weck & Beißwenger, 2014); reduced chances of market access of local actors; accessibility problems in terms of both transport and communication systems (digital divide). Intermediate and peripheral areas are thus left in a precarious position:

“They neither have the internal critical mass nor the capacity to generate external contacts and networks to compete with core areas. In these circumstances, a number of theories, from endogenous growth to the new economic geography, predict the possibility of their prolonged decay (Rodríguez-Pose & Fitjar, 2013, pp.355-356).”

According to Rodríguez-Pose and Fitjar (Ibidem, p. 358), the alternatives at the disposal of low-density areas are dwindling:

“They are basically left with two options. The first option is to do nothing, which would, inevitably, lead to decay and, perhaps, an eventual disappearance, while the second would imply a fight for survival, without any guarantee of succeeding.”

The “do nothing” option – that means relying on spread or trickle-down effects from urban cores to neighboring areas – has shown its fallacy leading to inevitable decay in the long run. The alternative to vanishing for intermediate and peripheral areas is resisting by trying to create sufficient economic dynamism so as to ensure their viability.

This “fight for survival” option is producing different outcomes. Some peripheral areas in Europe appear to have developed effective local strategies to deal with the disadvantages of marginal location, constraints on public spending and decrease in employment in traditional natural resource-based industries or agriculture in order to retain population or create wealth (Bryden & Munro, 2000), while some other seem to be locked in decline¹.

Seeking to understand the factors affecting the ability of a place to react to endogenous and continuous (slow burns) or exogenous and discrete (shocks) disturbances inevitably begs questions about what influences the endogenous development of a region and, thus, the

¹ See Bryden and Munro (2000) for a comparative study on pairs of localities (successful vs. unsuccessful rural areas) in Scotland and other European countries.

formulation of policy and governance structures that can enable and facilitate change. Hence, scientific reflection on local and regional development has recently broadened to encompass what increasingly appeared to be a missing puzzle tile within the analytical framework: the issue of resilience of territorial systems in responding to a diverse array of changes.

From an evolutionary perspective (Boschma, 2015; Simmie & Martin, 2010), resilience is conceptualized not just as the ability of a region to accommodate shocks, but extends it to its long-term capacity to reconfigure its socio-economic structure. One of the most intriguing questions is then why some places manage to renew themselves, whereas others remain “locked into” in a negative trajectory of economic development. This approach is particularly relevant when dealing with peripheral areas, that experience in most cases either a functional, cognitive or political lock-in (Grabher, 1993). Such places have faced enduring challenges involving long-term processes (i.e. deindustrialization, transition towards service-dominated economies, depopulation, marginalization), in other words a prolonged disturbance – as opposed to a second kind of disturbance based on a temporal distinction: shocks (like natural disasters) – that is referred to as “slow burn” (Pike et al., 2010). As Pendall, Foster, and Cowell (2010) note, slow burns or slow-moving crises are likely to erode regional adaptability capacity and tend to be corrosive of regional unity.

In contrast with equilibrium-based approaches – that failed to provide convincing explanations and remedies for the persistent economic and social concerns of these areas – the evolutionary perspective can better capture the geographical diversity, variety and unevenness of resilience of places (Pike et al., 2010). Moreover, the emphasis that the geographical interpretation of the concepts of adaptation and adaptability puts on agents, mechanisms and sites fills a gap left empty by the existing equilibrium-based work: the issue of social agency. As stressed by Pike et al. (Ibidem, p. 6), “*who or what is adapting or being adapted foregrounds the agency of actors and their relationships to structures.*”

Following Rodríguez-Pose and Fitjar (2013) on the policy measures implemented to combat the decay of peripheral areas what emerges is that the main solution being proposed in peripheral areas – i.e. nurturing interaction at close quarters through the promotion of local agglomeration (buzz option) – may yield limited results, as it would stifle the circulation of new knowledge and lead to or make places persist in lock-in. By contrast, the promotion of interaction outside the geographical, cognitive, social and institutional proximity (pipeline option) – that has been recognized valuable for innovation if it is not “too much” (Boschma, 2005) – was contemplated more rarely, but is potentially more likely to succeed in generating interactive learning and in facilitating the generation, diffusion and absorption of innovation.

For low-density and low-accessibility areas this is a crucial issue: in what may be relatively small, remote, relatively isolated environments the lack of circulation of new knowledge is likely to lead to institutional lock-in and smother productivity and growth. Hence, as Rodríguez-Pose & Fitjar point out (2013, p.356),

“promoting interaction of local economic agents with agents well beyond the borders of the community, city or region may be a more viable, if not always entirely secure, way of maintaining and enhancing the dynamism of intermediate and peripheral areas.”

The continuous “injection” of new knowledge into the system, through the creation of new networks, allowing local actors’ interactive learning, is deemed as essential for the survival of inner areas where the same information tends to “stagnate” in the absence of an intervention, be it internal (i.e. the initiative of a Schumpeterian entrepreneur) or external (i.e. a policy).

As stated by Bryden and Munro (2000), successful strategies in peripheral areas essentially involve enhancing and commercializing local “non-mobile” or “less mobile” (often intangible) assets as a way of capturing new markets. Less tangible factors, that better account for differences between localities in similar starting

conditions – include local community and culture, institutional performance, networks and quality of life. More importantly,

“following such strategies, local actors make full use of both internal and external networks and markets, and forge new relationships with these. The interesting issues lie around the pairs: mobile and immobile; tangible and intangible; local and global (Ibidem, p. 111).”

According to the authors, the explanation behind the differential in the performance of peripheral areas – that can be connected to the issue of resilience and cannot be explained either by traditional theories (core-periphery or neo-classical) nor by the ones produced within the new economic geography – lies to some extent in local capacities to develop and exploit less mobile assets, in the form of economic, social, cultural and environmental capital, as well as the synergies between these assets, and the ways in which external networks and associations are used to find new markets and resources. Another suggestion put forward by the same scholars concerns the role of entrepreneurship, that we will discuss in the next paragraph: “differential economic performance between ‘localities’ is closely related to the actions of ‘entrepreneurs’. Such actions can be individual or self-interested and/or collective or social.” (Ibidem, p. 113). The already found complementarity between “internal”/“external” applies in this case as well. Entrepreneurs “function” within a place also going beyond it, acting trans-locally, at regional, national, supra-national and global scales. However, at the local level, cultural factors (risk taking behaviours, trust, attitudes to cooperate and openness to novelty) will matter. In this respect, it is worth noting that some of the less tangible explanatory factors underpinning the differential performance of peripheral areas are closely linked to the notion of social capital (see next paragraph). A chance for the entrepreneurial activity in these territories often stems from the capability of putting in value public or quasi-public – mostly immobile – goods which are deeply embedded in those places, including the

environment, cultural heritage, landscape, and exploiting their untapped potential. In this context, tourism, as also found in literature, frequently remains the preferred development option for the economic and social regeneration of rural communities (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004), being identified as a catalyst to stimulate economic growth.

The great challenge for peripheral areas relies on the fact that the supply of potential entrepreneurs confronting the threats and take advantage of the opportunities available in these localities is by no means guaranteed. This is because

“those who could reasonably have been expected to perform the entrepreneurial function may well have been the first to seek to out-migrate to more inviting urban areas. Thus the key economic challenge for rural areas is how can a small number of entrepreneurial individuals adjust to and exploit the characteristics of their external environment (Labrianidis, 2006, p. 4).”

Moreover, peripheral regions are seen as lacking in favorable elements and conditions for an innovative *milieu* to emerge due to the presence of several barriers to innovation. This is perceived as limiting or even hindering the development of these regions (Doloreux & Dionne, 2008).

COPING WITH PERIPHERALITY IN PRACTICE

Policies and practices

The previous paragraph has shown whether and how peripheral areas can cope with peripherality and peripheralization, from a theoretical perspective that relies on regional resilience as the conceptual framework that allows to understand the possible trajectories of local development: either “do nothing” and be destined to decay, depopulation and economic marginality, or “fight for survival” by attempting to turn the disadvantages of peripherality into the new assets of a desired inversion of the current negative trends.

Policy-wise, criticism of the use of city-centric discourses of development which seem to reiterate dependency over peripheries has given rise to a long debate over participation and compliance of territories to state control and top-down interventions (see Abram, 1998; Shore & Wright, 2011), given that often “policy decisions have been taken at the core which are intended to reduce the disadvantage felt at the periphery.” (Botterill et al., 2000, p. 23).

In an attempt to provide examples of how the dialectic between existing policies and emerging community-based practices can give rise to original and innovative ways of coping with peripherality, this section presents two fields in which the issue is proving to be particularly relevant: entrepreneurship and tourism.

LOCAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Analysing the role of the entrepreneur in regional development requires the acknowledgment of two macro perspectives respectively on the economic and on the social significance of entrepreneurship in peripheral areas.

In the first case, oversimplifying for the sake of brevity, entrepreneurial behaviour is seen as economically motivated, as the result of specific structural conditions and as typical of a specific mind-set. In this sense, two systems of entrepreneurship can be distinguished: “one driven by opportunity and innovation and associated with economic growth [...] and one driven by necessity” (Rosa & Caulkins, 2013, pp. 108-109).

Regarding the social significance of entrepreneurship, in a comparative study on how peripheries are perceived in Spain and Germany, Pfeilstetter (2013) evidenced that “the entrepreneur has become one of the most popular key players responsible for socio-economic change in small territories” (Ibidem, p. 46). He follows the idea that a strictly qualitative assessment of entrepreneurship only shows one side of the coin, and therefore a mixed methodology approach to the study of the phenomenon would add up to the understanding of if and how entrepreneurship can be relevant for economic development in peripheral areas, stating that i.e. “from a socio-anthropological point of view, human motivation in general and

entrepreneurial behaviour in particular cannot be explained only by rational economic calculation or by psychological variables” (Ibidem, p. 47). Indeed, when focusing on community-based regional development, it is possible to witness an accent on factors which are not specifically economic, but that rather rely “on the idea of local societies, which constitute a microcosm of kinship, friendship, pertinence to a cultural community based on corporal and spatial proximity in neighbourhoods, quarters, districts, towns, villages, etc.” (Ibidem, p. 48).

The study of entrepreneurship in peripheral areas, moreover, requires to pose the attention on two aspects that highly impact on local development: family firms and in-migration.

Pfeilstetter identifies family projects as one of the conditions that facilitate entrepreneurship in peripheral areas, defining them as “formed and sustained by a group of people who are related through economic ties and often associated with one or two households, for example a family business” (Ibidem, p. 53), recognizing in the female entrepreneur one of the core figures of family entrepreneurship, usually emerging as a consequence of maternity and the search for an occupation that is compatible for family life. According to the author such forms of entrepreneurship are usually not perceived as business-related, but actually as a strategy for subsistence.

The role of immigrants is not less multifaceted, as indicated by Labrianidis (2006) and demonstrated by Caulkin’s (1992) attempt to profile figures with high entrepreneurial potential, though actually perceived as ‘unexpected entrepreneurs’ in Wales and Northeast England:

“the ‘returning native son’ left the region for education and employment before returning to the natal region to start up a firm; the ‘life-style immigrant’ usually from the English Southeast, wanted a less stressful, more rural way of life in Wales or Scotland; and the ‘entrepreneurial immigrant’ started up businesses in peripheral regions primarily for economic advantages, including lower labor costs and enhanced tax benefits (Rosa & Caulkins, 2013, p. 110).”

Understanding the role of family enterprises and of immigrants in local development could add up to the already extensive research on local development strategies and their possible overlapping with public policies, particularly in community and place-based approaches.

TOURISM

Geographer G. Wall (Hall, Harrison, Weaver, & Wall, 2013) has analysed the conceptualisation of the core-periphery tie in relation to tourism, through the consideration of how tourism impacts on local systems, concluding that:

“It is not yet clear whether and in what form development in peripheral areas can be initiated successfully through tourism, to what extent tourism initially uses infrastructures developed by and for other sectors, and what these things might mean for development policies (Ibidem, p. 86).”

While several analyses (i.e. Brown & Hall, 2000b; Chaperon & Bramwell, 2013; Christaller, 1963; Moscardo, 2005; Wanhill, 1997) evidenced that tourism seems to be particularly appealing as a viable development strategy in peripheral areas, both from a bottom-up and a top-down perspective, it is worth to take into consideration Brown and Hall's (2000a) suggestion regarding the existence of two paradoxes linked with peripheral tourism destinations: 1) those attributes of peripherality which are normally perceived as negative by locals and by policy makers (ie. weak economies based on natural resources, their location away from major transport routes, low levels of population, etc.) can be turned into opportunities and assets, to the extent that “it is the very symptoms of peripherality that now suggest an antidote to the economic and social problem it causes” (Ibidem, p. 3); 2) if tourism in peripheral destinations begins to prosper, they may be losing that peculiar character that encouraged their success and be considered “too touristy” (Ibidem, pp. 4-5). Actively involving the local community in the development and management of the tourism market seems therefore the only way to create a development tool that

serves as an element of *diversification* from other sectors of the local economy which are currently in retreat, in opposition to considering tourism as the easiest way to solve the problems usually attached to peripherality.

In the wake of such premises, a number of studies has been dedicated to demonstrate that local actors are not necessarily passive in development strategies that involve the creation (or the implementation) of a tourism market in peripheral areas, and that their agency is pivotal to the tourism experience (see i.e. Chaperon & Bramwell, 2013). Indeed, while on the one hand a certain degree of compliance to national development plans is necessary, on the other, tourism development strategies require a participative approach by the citizens (Abram, 1998).

In the case of tourism in peripheral/rural areas, it is therefore often necessary to turn from considering these places as geographically marginal territories that have been shaped through the years by human activities such as agriculture and pastoralism, to seeing them as “tourismscapes”, a term that “refers to the genesis of a complex of interactions between people, place, organisations, objects, all being or becoming connected in tourism related actor-network” (Jansen-Verbeke, 2009, p. 935), although “the dilemma between freezing landscapes of the past [...] and injecting new economic activities cannot be easily solved” (Ibidem, p. 936).

Discussing the possible development paths through tourism in peripheral areas entails taking into consideration the possibilities arising from local agency and entrepreneurship, particularly in relation to heritage making (*heritagisation*) processes, as for example evidenced by Pezzi’s (2017) study on the positive effects brought in the Italian Apennines by bottom-up heritage regeneration strategies. In her analysis of historical re-enactments, the author highlights that “such happenings can help develop a kind of cultural tourism based on the re-enactment of historical events and feasts, through authentic, or at least verisimilar, experiences, performances and participation, the repetition of which over the years contributes in legitimating such events on the basis that a tradition that has been (re)-invented becomes institutionalized. Additionally, such events provide the

tourists with the illusion of being able to glimpse into these areas' back stages" (Ibidem, p. 16). On the other hand, heritage regeneration reinforces the locals' sense of belonging and reinforces collective identities, serving as a trigger for the creation, or maintenance, of high degrees of social capital based on locality.

Heritage-making processes and local agency

To fully understand what heritagisation actually involves, and why it is relevant for development in peripheral areas, it is necessary to define how it is understood in relation to tourism.

Heritage-making, or *heritagisation*, has often been considered negatively due to being "accused" of commoditizing the local culture in terms of tourism fruition, leaving little space for local actors going hand in hand with *tourismification* a term that refers to "a socio-economic and socio-cultural process by which society and its environment have been turned into spectacles, attractions, playgrounds, and consumption sites" (Wang, 2000, p. 197). And it is in a very similar perspective that Hall, Harrison, Weaver & Wall (2013) explored, for example, whether and how tourism can consume places, implying that tourism in peripheral areas can possibly lead to the "loss" of the periphery due to its progressive commodification.

As in Pfeilstetter's (2015) study on heritage tourism in Spain, "cultural heritage as an economic-touristic resource is promoted [...] through national and international policies" (Ibidem, p. 217). What can be easily implied then, following folklorist Bendix (2009, p.255), is that "cultural heritage does not exist, it is made", and therefore it could be maintained that power relationships are always a central matter in heritage-making (Silva & Santos, 2012).

Besides criticism, what is important to underline is that

"the process of heritage recognition can be seen as an encounter between the ownership claims or social adherence at a local level [...] and an exterior construction linked to the influence of a social demand for tourism [...]. Analysing how heritage is selected and identified involves measuring the catalyst mechanism that spark a 'heritage realisation' among local actors (Bessière, 2013, p. 282)."

In this sense Pfeilstetter (2015) introduces the hypothesis of linking the concept of entrepreneurship with heritage construction processes when dealing with development paths in peripheral areas, differentiating the image of the heritage entrepreneur “from the idea of the mediator between the community and the experts or the distinction between heritage holders and heritage practitioners” (Ibidem, p. 218). Identifying the figure of the heritage entrepreneur aims to focus on the agency of local formal and informal actors, on the legal institutionalisation of heritage and on the political and symbolical resources of heritage making (Ibidem, p. 219), allowing to overcome the idea that local actors are more often an object of tourism and heritage policies, towards the recognition of what has been defined as *heritagepreneurship* (Lundberg, Ramírez-Pasillas & Högberg, 2016).

CONTENTS OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE

Discussing the future development prospects of inner peripheries, interpreted as places affected by slow-burn processes (Pendall et al. 2010; Pike et al., 2010), we see value in prompting further cross-disciplinary research on the theme of local resilience, which helps investigating the strategies these peculiar territories put in place to fight for survival. This special issue explores both policy-level and community-based initiatives to cope with peripherality and/or peripheralization in the European context. In sum, all six papers deal on the one hand with the limits of peripheral areas that at this particular time seem to be at a crossroads and on the other hand on their potentialities, be they stimulated by a policy measure or by a local entrepreneurship in response to these constraints. The papers point out policies or measures that, directly or indirectly, aim to better the living conditions in these areas (hence, the emphasis also on the improvement of the provision of essential services) and to stimulate local agency. In this regard, the success stories coming from the local community that were investigated by some of the authors provide valuable insights on the importance of innovation practices and local-

global linkages in remote areas.

The special issue begins with Copus, Mantino, Noguera's reflection on inner peripheries, which explores the origin of the concept and proposes practical methods to delimit and map inner peripheries in Europe, while considering the potential policy implications.

Garlandini and Torricelli in their article propose an analysis based on the indicator of "centrality" aiming to identify the "central places" of a peripheral/marginal region. The indicator proposed is built on parameters that make it useful to point out the potentials of peripheral/marginal areas in terms of services development, making use of four geo-datasets to model, quantitatively and qualitatively, the supply of local services (thirty types of private and public services were taken into account and classified in five categories), the proximity of the population to services (mean linear distance), the availability of public transport (quality of stops) and the potential connectivity of residential buildings to the Internet (quality of the Internet connection).

The contribution by Andreoli and Silvestri explores the tourism development potentiality in territories involved in the Italian "National Strategy for Inner Areas" (SNAI) on the one hand. On the other hand, it looks at the conditions to be secured so that tourism could act as a real engine for growth. Starting from the analysis of available documents produced by the pilot areas involved in SNAI so far, the authors classified the different territories on the basis of their emphasis on the tourism issue.

Marongiu and Cesaro, using an analytical approach, focus on the performance and profitability of some agricultural systems in Inner Areas compared with those located in the Centres, analysing the economic results of the holdings surveyed through the Italian Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN) during the period 2012-2014 and belonging to four Types of Farming: cereals, oilseed and protection crops (COP), viticulture, fruit sector, livestock. The paper highlights the difference in the most important budgetary outcomes and in a set of selected income indicators related to production factors (land and labour).

The article by Orria and Luise presents the case of “neo-rurality” in inner areas in the Campania region (southern Italy), based on fieldwork and interviews, undertaken in Campania during 2015. The study points out that, through a collective narrative, farmers are constructing a “neo-rurality” brand of local quality food and promotion of the territory, proposing a novel combination of economic practices and value production in Alternative Agri-food Movements.

The contribution by Pezzi focuses on how tourism is locally interpreted in peripheral areas, taking the cue from a wider research on the implementation of SNAI in the Marche’s Apennines under the hypothesis that the creation of a tourism market in such areas requires, on the one hand, the selection of few cultural traits perceived as more “charismatic”, often enhanced through dedicated events, and, on the other hand, the creation of new potential attractors in line with the expectations of prospective rural tourists. In doing so, the intersections between craft beer brewing and tourism are analysed through the description of the “Alogastronomia” phenomenon.

Finally, Lopez, Guilarte and González describe the tourism implication of the Jacobean pilgrimage in Finisterre (Spain) highlighting how the territorial changes have transformed the landscape and contributed to its local socio-economic development. Moreover, the article seeks to evaluate the role of intangible heritage in the social and landscape transformations in Finisterre following its reconversion to a tourist destination through the use of statistical sources and document archives from the Pilgrim’s Office.

Concluding remarks

In the face of such a complex “conundrum” as the one of the viability of peripheral areas in a globalized world, no real resolving and conclusive solution could be proposed. However, all papers implicitly or explicitly suggest interesting pathways to overcome or struggle with some of the limits to the development of these areas.

The role of institutions is unquestionable. Therefore, regional and local institutions should be helped in developing adaptive capacities so as to be better able to read, respond and promote adaptation or

adaptability to change (Pike et al., 2010). Yet it is also difficult to see how the agentic capacity of peripheral rural areas can be strengthened without policies targeted at bolstering and implementing latent resources, such as local entrepreneurship. In absence of policies dedicated to the development of social, cultural, economic and infrastructural conditions able to support entrepreneurship in peripheral rural areas, current observations show a consistent trend towards processes of further marginalization and decay. This is particularly true the case in those areas suffering from depopulation, especially due to the exodus of the younger segments of the population. Thus policies to encourage entrepreneurship need to be closely tied to improvements in the physical and social infrastructure that will make these areas more attractive places to live and work (North & Smallbone, 2006), in an attempt to overcome the conceptualization of the word being divided between cores and peripheries, with the latter depending from the former, constantly exercising an attraction power in terms of human and economic capital.

Future research perspectives should question the functionality of the dichotomy core-periphery in terms of prospect development in peripheral areas, and in the overcoming of peripheralization, hypothesizing the existence of a so-called “right to remoteness” (see Pezzi & Punziano, in press), to be broadly defined as the right and the ability of these territories to claim their social and economic relevance regardless of their geographical localization.

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