“BEHIND THE ECCE HOMO”

RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY
AND THE EFFECTS OF DEPOPULATION ON THE
PRESERVATION OF SPANISH HERITAGE

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‘Behind the Ecce Homo”

Rural Development Policy and the Effects of Depopulation on the Preservation of Spanish Heritage

Alberto Sanchez-Sanchez
Cover Image: Abandoned house in Bello (Teruel, Spain) – 238 inhabitants. Bello has lost 81.3% of its population since 1950.

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<td>Common Agricultural Policy.</td>
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<td>CF</td>
<td>Cohesion Fund.</td>
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<td>EAFRD</td>
<td>European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.</td>
</tr>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>European Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMFF</td>
<td>European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERDF</td>
<td>European Regional Development Fund.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESF</td>
<td>European Social Fund.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAG</td>
<td>Local Action Group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADER</td>
<td>French acronym meaning “links between actions for the development of the rural economy.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDRS</td>
<td>Spanish acronym meaning “sustainable rural development program.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRODER</td>
<td>Spanish acronym meaning “development and economic diversification operation program for rural areas.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROPROM</td>
<td>Program for the Promotion of Agricultural Resources in Mountain Areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDP</td>
<td>Rural Development Program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAC</td>
<td>Special Area of Conservation</td>
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<td>SPA</td>
<td>Special Protection Area</td>
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Chapter 1

Introduction
Abandoned house in Tornos (Teruel, Aragón, Spain) – 235 inhabitants.

Tornos has lost 77.5% of its population since 1950.
1.1. Abstract

The ongoing process of rural depopulation that Europe has experienced during the 20th century has had a considerably negative effect on the conservation of vernacular and historic buildings located in rural areas (Figure 1.1). Although this is a continental phenomenon, it seems to be especially prevalent in Southern Europe, and particularly in Spain. Taking the infamous restoration of the *Ecce Homo* fresco in the town of Borja (Zaragoza) as a starting point, this thesis aims to examine this problem, explore its magnitude, and identify challenges and opportunities to incorporate historic preservation into existing policies for rural development.

The primary aim of this thesis is to build more knowledge and understanding about this issue, which has been the focus of very limited scholarly research. Therefore, this thesis includes a detailed description of depopulation and rural heritage in the European and Spanish context, based on an extensive literature review and supplemented by the study of a particular Spanish rural area, the *comarcas* of Daroca, Jiloca, and Molina. In addition, a thorough policy review is presented, analyzing the extent to which historic preservation has been considered as part of the existing rural development policies at the European, Spanish, and regional levels. Finally, a series of research- and policy-related recommendations are proposed.
1.2. Problem Statement.

On August 7, 2012 the Centro de Estudios Borjanos (a small research institute located in the town of Borja in northeastern Spain) announced in its blog that a 1930’s fresco by painter Elías García Martínez at the Virgen de Misericordia sanctuary had been inexplicably altered. In a post entitled Un hecho incalificable (“An unclassifiable incident”), the institute explained that the fresco had been irreparably damaged during a failed attempt to restore it (Figure 1.2).¹ The blog entry went mostly unnoticed until a journalist from regional newspaper Heraldo de Aragón published an article about the restoration two weeks later, bringing the ‘before and after’ images to the cover page of the journal.² Neither the original blog post nor the article in Heraldo de Aragón mentioned who had been responsible for the unorthodox restoration work, but very soon other media outlets covered the incident and suggested that it had been an octogenarian woman, amateur painter, and habitué of the church.³ ⁴ ⁵ The news about the unusual restoration of the Ecce Homo

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spread rapidly, both nationally and internationally, and the story was covered by the BBC, The Telegraph, The New York Times, Libération, and Der Spiegel, among many other outlets. In general, most articles tended to emphasize how the good intentions of the restorer did not make up for her lack of expertise. As stated in The Guardian, “there can be little doubt that the woman, … an octogenarian local, was just trying to help.” Captivated by the amusing quality of the story, journalists and comedians all over the world joked about the restored Ecce Homo, but almost none analyzed the circumstances behind Ms. Cecilia Giménez’s failed restoration. Not only she was trying to help, but she was doing so in a particular cultural, demographic, and socioeconomic context.

The infamous fresco, as well as several other decorative elements at the Virgen de Misericordia Sanctuary, was deteriorating at a rapid pace as a result of natural aging, lack of maintenance, and rising damp. Concerned about the loss of the painting, Ms. Giménez selflessly offered her help, and she was given permission to intervene by the sanctuary’s priest. In fact, it was not the first time she had painted over some parts of the decaying fresco. Despite her lack of expertise, Ms. Giménez had been contributing to the preservation of the painting and to the daily maintenance of the 16th-century church for years. Along with other members of the local community (mainly women), Ms. Giménez acted as a steward of the sanctuary, moved by a strong religious sentiment towards the Virgen de Misericordia (the “Virgin of Mercy”) and also by a commonly established understanding of cultural heritage that is predominant in rural Spain. For generations, exactly as in the case of the Ecce Homo, locals like Ms. Giménez have been the primary caretakers of Spanish rural heritage. “Behind the Ecce Homo” lay the challenges for the preservation of Spanish rural heritage.

Due to the ongoing rural depopulation that the country has been experiencing since the 1950s, this longstanding but informal system of common stewardship of cultural heritage in rural areas is under threat. Aging, shrinking rural communities lack not only the monetary and human resources to undertake the preservation of historic sites, but also the expertise and critical mass that prevent cases such as the Ecce Homo from occurring. In fact, the Virgen de Misericordia sanctuary is located in a small hamlet within the municipality of Borja, which despite its small population (roughly 5,000 inhabitants) is home to the local research center that noticed and denounced the botched restoration of the fresco. However, in smaller, shrinking municipalities the existence of such institutions is not feasible. In a country where almost 3,900 municipalities have less than 500 inhabitants (of which over 1,200 have less than 100 people), the preservation of rural heritage is an enormous challenge.\footnote{\textsuperscript{12}}

There is no official account of historic properties in rural Spain, but the analysis of the \textit{Lista Roja del Patrimonio} (“Heritage in Danger List”) by the non-profit organization \textit{Hispania Nostra} might be a good indicator of the general trends. The list was first established in 2007 and it is elaborated by a scientific committee that reviews nominations submitted by individuals, educational institutions, other non-profit organizations, and public agencies. A nomination of a property has to be submitted in order to be included, and therefore the list is not a comprehensive catalogue of all endangered historic sites in Spain. Nevertheless, as of February 2016, it includes over 600 sites across the entire country. The great majority of the properties are located in small hamlets, villages, and towns. In the provinces of Zaragoza and Guadalajara (parts of which are the subject of a more detailed analysis within this thesis), over 70% of the endangered properties selected by \textit{Hispania Nostra} are located in villages with a population under 500 people (Tables 1.1. and 1.2.). Similar trends are evident in other provinces of inland Spain, such as Cuenca, Palencia, León, and Zamora. In the case of Soria, the country’s least populated province (92,221 inhabitants, 8.95 pop./km$^2$), over 75% of the endangered historic buildings and sites included in \textit{Hispania Nostra}’s list are located in villages or hamlets with a population under 250 people.\footnote{\textsuperscript{13}}

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{12} Instituto Nacional de Estadística, “Cifras oficiales de población resultantes de la revisión del Padrón municipal a 1 de enero de 2015 (Distribución de los municipios por provincias y tamaño de los municipios),” \url{http://www.ine.es/dynt3/inebase/es/index.html?padre=517&dh=1}}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{13} Hispania Nostra, “Lista Roja del Patrimonio (Provincia de Soria),” \url{http://listarojapatrimonio.org/localizacion-ficha/castilla-y-leon/soria/}}
\end{footnotesize}
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(according to the *Lista Roja del Patrimonio Histórico* by Hispania Nostra)\(^{14}\)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name of the site</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church of <em>Virgen de la Huerta</em></td>
<td>15(^{th})-17(^{th})</td>
<td>Villanueva de Jalón(^{15})</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tower of <em>Obano</em></td>
<td>11(^{th})</td>
<td>Obano(^{16})</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of <em>San Miguel de Tiermas</em></td>
<td>14(^{th})-18(^{th})</td>
<td>Tiermas</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tower of the <em>Condes de Bareta</em></td>
<td>14(^{th})</td>
<td>Pleitas</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle</td>
<td>12(^{th})</td>
<td>Berdejo</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle</td>
<td>14(^{th})</td>
<td>Bijuesca</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrine of <em>San Miguel de las Cheulas</em></td>
<td>13(^{th})</td>
<td>El Frago</td>
<td>104</td>
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<tr>
<td>Castle</td>
<td>14(^{th})-15(^{th})</td>
<td>Langa del Castillo</td>
<td>137</td>
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<td>Shrine of <em>Ntra. Sra. de Gañarul</em></td>
<td>15(^{th})</td>
<td>Agón</td>
<td>155</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monastery of <em>San Bartolomé or del Santo</em></td>
<td>13(^{th})</td>
<td>Tosos</td>
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<td>Shrine of <em>San Juan</em></td>
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<td>Castle</td>
<td>12(^{th})</td>
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<td>Church of <em>Ntra. Sra. de la Asunción</em></td>
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<td>Shrine of <em>Santa Quiteria</em></td>
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<td>Castle</td>
<td>10(^{th})-11(^{th})</td>
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<td>Church of the Dominican Convent</td>
<td>16(^{th})</td>
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<td>Castle</td>
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<td>9(^{th})-10(^{th})</td>
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<td>Church of <em>San Miguel</em></td>
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<td>Maluenda</td>
<td>1,034</td>
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<td>Castle of <em>La Palma</em></td>
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<td>Sástago</td>
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<td>Monastery of <em>Santa María de Cambrón</em></td>
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<td>Averly Foundry</td>
<td>19(^{th})</td>
<td>Zaragoza</td>
<td>664,953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Islamic City Ruins of Zaragoza</td>
<td>11(^{th})-12(^{th})</td>
<td>Zaragoza</td>
<td>664,953</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{14}\) Hispania Nostra, “Lista Roja del Patrimonio (Provincia de Zaragoza),”
http://listarojapatrimonio.org/localizacion-ficha/aragon/zaragoza/

\(^{15}\) Villanueva de Jalón is an abandoned village. It is currently part of the Chodes municipality (132 inhabitants).

\(^{16}\) Obano is an abandoned medieval village. It is currently part of the Luna municipality (756 inhabitants).
Table 1.2: Endangered historic properties in the province of Guadalajara
(according to the *Lista Roja del Patrimonio Histórico* by Hispania Nostra)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the site</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church of Ntra. Sra. de la Asunción</td>
<td>13th-17th</td>
<td>Villaescusa de Palositos 18</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>12th-13th</td>
<td>Querencia 19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monastery of San Blas</td>
<td>14th</td>
<td>Villaviciosa de Tajuña</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle</td>
<td>12th-15th</td>
<td>Torresaviñán 20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle</td>
<td>12th-17th</td>
<td>Pelegrina</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manor House of La Bujeda</td>
<td>14th-15th</td>
<td>Traid</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monastery of Santa María de Bonaval</td>
<td>12th-17th</td>
<td>Retiendas</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monastery of San Salvador</td>
<td>13th-15th</td>
<td>Pinilla de J德拉que</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle</td>
<td>15th</td>
<td>Galve de Sorbe</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convent of Ntra. Sra. de la Salceda</td>
<td>14th-17th</td>
<td>Peñalver 21</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monastery of San Bartolomé</td>
<td>14th-16th</td>
<td>Lupiana</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monastery of Santa Ana</td>
<td>15th</td>
<td>Tendilla</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monastery of Sopetrán</td>
<td>14th</td>
<td>Hita</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Convent of San Francisco</td>
<td>14th-16th</td>
<td>Atienza</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convent of Ntra. Sra. de la Concepción</td>
<td>16th</td>
<td>Almonacid de Zorita</td>
<td>760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monastery of Santa María de Óvila</td>
<td>12th</td>
<td>Trillo</td>
<td>1,436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of San Simón</td>
<td>13th-16th</td>
<td>Brihuega</td>
<td>2,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palace of Virrey Valdés</td>
<td>18th</td>
<td>Molina de Aragón</td>
<td>3,468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt Mines of Imón</td>
<td>10th-20th</td>
<td>Sigüenza</td>
<td>4,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Village of Villafloros</td>
<td>19th</td>
<td>Guadalajara 22</td>
<td>83,391</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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17 Hispania Nostra, “Lista Roja del Patrimonio (Provincia de Guadalajara),”
http://listarojapatrimonio.org/localizacion-ficha/castilla-la-mancha/guadalajara/

18 Villaescusa de Palositos is an abandoned village. It is currently part of the Peralveche municipality (70 inhabitants).

19 Querencia is an abandoned village. It is currently part of the Sigüenza municipality (4,648 inhabitants).

20 The village of Torresaviñán is currently part of the Torremocha del Campo municipality (200 inhabitants).

21 The Convent of Ntra. Sra. de la Salceda is located between Peñalver and Tendilla (339 inhabitants).

22 Villafloros is an abandoned industrial settlement that is part of the city of Guadalajara.
Certainly, the absence of development pressure during most of the 20th century has allowed many Spanish villages to keep a high quality environment and a significant number of very remarkable vernacular and historic buildings. However, the depopulation of rural areas triggered by that lack of development and economic growth is seriously threatening the community-sustained preservation of both natural and cultural heritage. The pernicious effects of depopulation and land abandonment on the natural environment have been the subject of extensive research and public attention.23 In fact, European, Spanish, and regional rural development policies, while primarily focused on sustaining agriculture to ensure food security, have evolved through time to include a specific recognition of farmers as stewards of the environment.24 However, public institutions and academia alike have paid very limited attention to the effects of depopulation on cultural heritage and to the crucial role of local communities as the real stewards and caretakers of rural heritage.

In this context, the goals of this thesis are manifold. First, this thesis aims to set out and emphasize the magnitude and relevance of the problem by describing both the depopulation of Spanish rural areas and the significance of the heritage resources that they treasure. This description is supplemented and illustrated by the analysis of a specific zone of Spain particularly familiar to this researcher, the comarcas of Daroca (Zaragoza), Jiloca (Teruel), and Molina de Aragón-Alto Tajo (Guadalajara). Secondly, this thesis seeks to determine to what extent historic preservation is being considered – or not – as part of the existing rural development policies at the European, Spanish, and regional levels. A thorough policy analysis is the basis for the research regarding this particular goal. Thirdly, this thesis presents the challenges and opportunities for the actual inclusion of historic preservation as a tool to halt depopulation and promote rural development. Both challenges and opportunities, presented jointly as findings of this thesis, are based on the study of several sources, from policy documents to different cases and issues described in the literature. Finally, this thesis proposes a series of recommendations. These suggestions are both research- and policy-related, proposing a series of questions and considerations that should be placed in the institutional and research agendas.

1.3. Rationale

This thesis aims to create a better knowledge and understanding of the dilapidation of Spanish rural heritage due to the multiple side effects of depopulation, an issue to which very little attention has been paid from the fields of historic preservation and rural studies. Extensive research has been carried out regarding the depopulation of rural Europe and rural Spain, and indeed the topic has received considerable media attention.\(^25\)\(^26\)\(^27\) However, the effects of depopulation on the preservation of historic resources have been very scarcely studied, both nationally and internationally, as demonstrated by the lack of academic literature regarding this issue. Similarly, with a few exceptions, the extent to which historic preservation has been used as a tool for rural development has received little attention from researchers worldwide.\(^28\)

Another likely reason behind this lack of scholarly research on the topic is the overwhelming focus on agriculture within rural studies. Although European rural history has greatly expanded since the 1960s, it has still primarily focused on the study of agriculture and agricultural history, lacking a broader understanding of other aspects that shape rural communities.\(^29\) Even in the United Kingdom, the European country with the most well-developed rural history research field, many scholars have argued against the lack of attention paid to the study of non-farm rural issues due to the common trend to equate “rural” with “agricultural.”\(^30\)\(^31\) In the case of Spain, rural history and rural studies have significantly expanded since the 1980s, especially after the publication of Historia agraria de la España contemporánea by García Sanz, Garrabou, and Fernández.\(^32\) However, similarly to what has occurred elsewhere in Europe, Spanish rural historians have primarily focused on agriculture.\(^33\)

\(^26\) Buck, Tobias, “A Spanish Exodus to the Cities Leaves a Desert in its Wake,” Financial Times, December 12, 2014, http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/09fe45a-8053-11e4-8053-00144fabe0c0.html#slide0
\(^32\) García Sanz, Ángel, Ramón Garrabou, and José Sanz Ferández (eds.), Historia Agraria de la España Contemporánea (Barcelona: Crítica, 1985).
As already suggested in the first issue of the journal *Rural History* published in 1990, rural issues go beyond “cows and ploughs.” As such, the common identification of “rural” with “agricultural” has misled the study of many topics that cannot be approached as purely agricultural subjects. More significantly, it has also greatly influenced the political understanding of the ‘rural’ and the design and implementation of rural development policies, especially at the European level (and subsequently at the national and regional levels). According to Gray, the EU represents rurality as “a configuration of agriculture and rural space in which agriculture is the encompassing concept defining the nature and values pervading the whole rural space.”

As a result, in fact most of the European policies and programs for rural areas are part of the broad Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Scholars do agree on how “rural history is crucial for the construction of the history of medieval and early modern Europe.” This thesis works from the assumption that the preservation of the historic resources that resulted from those periods is therefore essential to understand Europe’s past. Furthermore, this thesis also builds from the assumption that it might be a crucial tool to ensure the future of the areas where those historic resources are located. In this regard, this thesis supports the argument about the necessity of broadening the scope and mechanisms of rural development, an ongoing debate in the EU since the early 2000s. As such, this research seems to be particularly timely. The current CAP of the Union (2014-2020) was approved around three years ago, while the discussions for the following period (2021-2028) will be starting soon. In this context, this thesis aims to support the case for an increased awareness of rural heritage and its preservation, both in Spain and in Europe as a whole, as a means to stop depopulation and contribute to rural development.

1.4. Research Questions

As already mentioned, this thesis has four primary objectives: describe the effects of depopulation on the preservation of Spanish rural heritage; analyze the role of historic preservation in the current European, Spanish, and regional rural development policies; determine if the preservation of historic resources could contribute to those existing policies; and recommend a series of actions to be undertaken at the research and policy realms. Therefore, the following questions guided the research process regarding these four goals:

What (Background)

What is “rural”?  
What is therefore “rural depopulation”? What is “rural heritage”?  
What are the effects of depopulation in rural areas?  
What are its effects on the preservation of Spanish rural heritage in particular?  
What are the actual European, Spanish, and regional policies for rural development?  
What are the character-defining features of those policies?  
What were the decision- and policy-makers trying to accomplish?

Why (Challenges & Opportunities)

Why is depopulation occurring?  
Why have years of EU-funded rural development plans been unable to stop it?  
Why are local communities essential for the preservation of rural heritage?  
Why has their role as caretakers of cultural heritage not been recognized?  
Why should the existing rural development policies incorporate historic preservation?  
Why is it relevant and for whom?  
Why has historic preservation been excluded from those policies in the past?

How (Recommendations)

How could policy-makers become aware of the relevance of the issue?  
How does historic preservation interact with the rationale of existing policies?  
How could scholars contribute to the debate?  
How could heritage be incorporated into other disciplines’ scope of research?
1.5. Methodology

This thesis was developed through the use of three different but supplemental approaches: a review of relevant articles, books, and reports addressing rural issues, rural development, and rural heritage; the specific analysis, or case study, of a particular area of Spain (the comarcas of Daroca, Jiloca, and Molina de Aragón-Alto Tajo) that served to both illustrate and challenge some of the issues described in the literature; and a review of the existing European, Spanish, and regional policies for rural development.

The conclusions derived from the analysis of the three different sources of information were later combined to determine the challenges and opportunities (id est, the feasibility) for the actual introduction of historic preservation in the existing rural development policies at the European, Spanish, and regional level. Finally, a series of research- and policy-related recommendations are presented, supplementing the conclusions.

1.5.1. Policy Review

The review of European, Spanish, and regional policy documents was carried out in order to determine and analyze the existing framework for rural development at those three levels, in particular the extent to which current policies consider historic preservation as a valid tool for rural development. Along with the actual legislation, other documents such as accompanying reports, brochures, communications, decisions, guidelines, official websites, and press releases were also analyzed.

The documentation was studied from a critical point of view, paying special attention to the lexicon used by each organism and the assumptions, connotations, and implications derived from it. The goal was to unveil the ideologies, discourses, and agendas that implicitly or explicitly influenced and determined the elaboration of rural development policies at the three different institutional levels. As such, this approach proved particularly useful in analyzing the challenges and opportunities for the introduction of historic preservation as a tool for rural development at the three studied policy levels.

39 In the case of regional policies, according to the chosen study area Aragón and Castilla-La Mancha were the chosen regions (“comunidades autónomas”) whose rural development policies were studied.
1.5.2. Literature Review

Along with the policy review, a review of relevant articles, books, and other scholarly sources was carried out. The literature review served to confirm the lack of data and research about the main issues discussed in this thesis. While the topics of depopulation, cultural heritage, and rural development have been the subjects of extensive research independently, very little attention has been paid to their interdependence. In contrast, the literature review identified an increasing academic interest in the relationship between depopulation, rural development policy, and natural heritage.

The review of academic publications was performed concurrently with the policy review, and indeed many of the analyzed sources were policy-related. The conclusions derived from both research methods (policy and literature review) are incorporated throughout the thesis, and therefore there is not a specific “literature review” section. This approach was required due to the aforementioned inexistence of a specific body of literature addressing the main topics of this thesis (such as the relationship between depopulation and the dilapidation of rural heritage).

1.5.3. Case Study

In order to illustrate and challenge some of the issues described in the literature, this thesis includes the description and analysis of a particular area of Spain, the adjacent comarcas (groups of municipalities) of Campo de Daroca (province of Zaragoza, region of Aragón), Jiloca (Teruel, Aragón), and Molina de Aragón-Alto Tajo (Guadalajara, Castilla-La Mancha).

This area was chosen for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the three comarcas have experienced a dramatic depopulation since the 1950s. Secondly, they possess an incredibly rich natural and cultural heritage. Thirdly, while they are very similar, these comarcas are located in three different provinces and two different regions, allowing for a comparison between different regional rural development policies. Fourthly, this researcher had prior first-hand knowledge about the area, which proved advantageous to describe, analyze, and compare the common features of the three comarcas, usually studied independently. Finally, and most importantly, the historic, demographic, social, and economic evolution of the area is in line with that of many other areas of rural Spain. As such, although the analysis of the area is very specific, the conclusions extracted from it may indeed be applied beyond this particular case study.
1.6. Assumptions

Several assumptions were made through the development of this thesis in order to establish the basis for the research. These assumptions are:

A. Historic buildings are significant resources that should be preserved and exploited

Although there is a current debate on the preservation field about the necessity to more precisely evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of historic preservation (both quantitatively and qualitatively), this thesis is based in the assumption that historic resources are significant assets that should be preserved in order to contribute to economic and social growth.

B. Rural depopulation is negatively affecting the preservation of cultural heritage

The depopulation of rural areas and the lack of development pressure it implies has allowed many rural historic buildings to preserve a high level of authenticity. In many cases, no modern materials were ever introduced, and the historic fabric is greatly preserved. However, the abandonment and lack of maintenance of a building lead to its dilapidation, and eventually to its collapse. In the case of intangible heritage, the negative effects of depopulation seem even more obvious. When a community disappears, so do its cultural traditions.

C. Depopulation is a continental phenomenon in Europe and rural development policy has failed to address it

Although this thesis focus primarily in Spain, the effects of depopulation on the preservation of heritage seem to be occurring in rural depopulating areas throughout Europe, with special emphasis on Southern European countries. After fifty years of European rural development policy, life conditions and average income in these areas have improved, but in many zones the population loss and its effects have continued steadily.

D. A response to the main issue described in this thesis should be given at the institutional (public) level

One of the main goals of this thesis is to emphasize the magnitude of the depopulation phenomenon and its effects on the preservation of rural heritage. Privately-funded initiatives have been successful in specific localities, but considering the scale of the issue, this thesis claims that a response to the problem should be provided at the public policy level.
1.7. Limitations

The research that served to inform this thesis was defined by a series of factors, including the necessary simplification of some large topics and issues (id est, “rural depopulation”) due to the time constraints inherent to this academic work. The limitations of this thesis were:

A. Limited study of other rural areas and policies in Europe and Spain

Rural depopulation and rural heritage are discussed from a broad perspective, but only a specific study area is analyzed and discussed in detail. Similarly, while the effects of depopulation in historic buildings is presented as a European problem, this thesis focuses mostly on Spain. Furthermore, within Spain itself, only the rural development policy of two particular regions (Aragón and Castilla-La Mancha) is analyzed.

B. Scarce study of cases in which preservation has been successfully used as a tool for rural development

The available quantitative data regarding the socioeconomic effects of heritage-led rural development programs in Europe is scarce. In this sense, this thesis may have been limited by building from the assumption (based in qualitative data) that historic preservation can successfully contribute to rural development.

C. Lack of data regarding the actual population of Spanish rural municipalities

The Spanish National Statistics Institute (“Instituto Nacional de Estadística”) keeps census data dating back to the 1800s, and it also collaborates with town and village councils to keep an annually-updated register of inhabitants. However, the actual population living in rural municipalities is hard to determine. In fact, people may choose to be registered as inhabitants of their hometowns for a variety of reasons (for instance, certain taxes are usually lower in small municipalities than in cities). Apparently, according to this researcher’s own experience, there are in fact fewer people living in rural municipalities than the statistics suggest.

D. Previous (biased) knowledge of Spanish rural areas on the part of this researcher

This researcher was raised in Used, a 288-inhabitant, steadily depopulating village in the comarca of Daroca (Zaragoza). Although this is an academic project, this researcher’s knowledge of the reality of Spanish rural areas may have prejudiced the research process.
Chapter 2

Rural Depopulation
Tornos has lost 77.5% of its population since 1950.
2.1. An Introduction to the Idea of the ‘Rural’

The Oxford English Dictionary characterizes ‘rural’ as opposed to the town or the city, and ‘urban’ as consequently opposed to the countryside.\(^1\)\(^2\) However, despite its apparently obvious meaning, the definition of the concept of the ‘rural’ and the reality that the word represents have been the subject of a (still ongoing) debate among specialized researchers for decades. According to Gray, “the existence of a distinct type of space and/or sociality that can be labelled ‘rural’ has been under sustained questioning since Pahl’s critique of the rural-urban continuum and Newby’s political-economy reformulation of the research agenda for rural localities.”\(^3\)\(^4\)\(^5\)\(^6\) Certainly, as also suggested by Gray, there are as many understandings of the ‘rural’ as there are social and cultural positions from which it was constituted in discourse. The ‘rural’ may refer to “valued place-images of country life” but also to “devalued place-images of rural backwardness, stasis, and decay,” among many others ideas.\(^7\) As described later in Chapter 4 of this thesis, the concept of rurality has also been shaped by political interests and agendas.

Despite the ongoing debate about the definition of rurality, the academic field has generally treated the ‘rural’ as “a distance object of knowledge,” and the idea of rurality has been interpreted alternatively as “locality” or as “social representation.”\(^8\) In this thesis, the ‘rural’ is understood as a combination of both. The idea of ‘rurality’ is used here to refer to a complex economic and social fabric, characterized by the relative relevance of farming and the agricultural sector; by the small scale of businesses, industries, commerce, and services; and also by a strong sense of identity and community. In contrast with what occurs in the urban territory, this rural social fabric is also highly conditioned and dependent on its surrounding natural environment. At the same time, the ‘rural’ is inherently dependent on its connections with the non-rural world, to the extent that the viability of rural communities seems unfeasible without the urban realm.

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More specifically, throughout this thesis, the idea of the ‘rural’ is used to refer to a particular reality, that of small European municipalities that, unlike the vast majority of their urban counterparts in the continent, experienced a significant and steady population loss during the 20th century. Rural areas throughout Europe vary greatly, and so do the threats they face (from urban development pressures to overexploitation of natural resources). However, the idea of ‘rurality’ used in this thesis is intrinsically linked to, and influenced by, the idea of depopulation and its social, cultural, and economic effects. In this regard, the analysis presented below aims not only to describe the phenomenon itself but also to characterize the rural environment it has so greatly shaped and influenced.

### 2.2. The Depopulation of Rural Europe (1850-present)

The depopulation of rural Europe during the 20th century has been the subject of extensive scholarly research. The phenomenon occurred (and in many areas it is still occurring) throughout the entire European continent, although its impact was greater in Western Europe. Adam Smith had already pointed out in the 18th century that “even intensely prosperous countries” could witness “the decay of certain economic branches or geographical spaces.” In particular, scholars have determined that depopulation affected especially the so-called “marginal rural communities,” primarily located in mountainous, isolated areas, where “extremes of remoteness and physical disadvantage reduced competitiveness and placed severe limits on technical and structural adaptation” of the economy, and specifically of agriculture.11

According to Collantes and Pinilla, the modern evolution of European rural population could be divided into three phases: from 1750 to 1850, from 1850 to 1950, and from 1950 to the present.12 Until 1850, the rural population in Europe grew significantly. From 1850 to 1950, the population in rural areas grew, but more slowly than the urban population, and the first modern episodes of depopulation appeared. From 1950 onwards, there has been a generalized

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decrease in European rural population, and most countries in the continent have experienced processes of rural depopulation. At the same time, there has also been a generalized trend towards urbanization, and consequently an increase in urban population. In this regard, the percentage of rural population in most European countries has decreased steadily during the last two centuries. In Table 2.1, this trend is analyzed for those European countries that had a rural population over 10 million in 1950 (with the exception of Yugoslavia). Among them only England experienced an increase in the percentage of rural population from 1910 to 2000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1800</th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>not available</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As determined by Collantes and Pinilla, in the last two centuries every country in Europe underwent “a drastic reduction in the share of rural population over national population,” both due to the growth of urban areas and to rural depopulation itself, a process that most countries in Europe experienced sooner or later. The characteristics of rural depopulation in each country (timing, intensity, etc.) were “historically contingent” and therefore greatly diverse. However, despite this diversity, it seems that the process of rural depopulation in most European countries followed two main concurrent causes: a decrease in the need of agricultural labor and an increase in the urban demand for industrial labor. These two phenomena appeared due to a number of reasons that varied from country to country. For instance, in Britain the decrease in the need for agricultural labor occurred in the late 19th century due to the so-called “great depression” of agriculture. On the contrary, in Spain it was the mechanization of agriculture in the 1950s and

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13 Ibid.
1960s that led to a decrease in the required agricultural workforce. In both cases, however, the decreasing demand of agricultural labor combined with an increasing demand of industrial workforce (also caused by a wide range of reasons) led to rural depopulation. Despite the differences among countries, there are some common trends that characterize the evolution of Europe’s rural population since 1850.

2.2.1. General Trends of Rural Depopulation in Europe

From 1850 to 1950, industrialization spread throughout Europe. It consolidated in Northern and Western Europe, and it started in Southern and Eastern countries. As the process of industrialization continued, urbanization accelerated, both followed and fueled by rural-urban migration. As a result, the first modern episodes of rural depopulation appeared precisely in those countries where industrialization developed earlier, in particular in North-Western Europe. As early as 1860 Britain and France had already experienced rural depopulation, with rural out-migration exceeding natural growth, a phenomenon that was particularly acute in small municipalities (under 5,000 inhabitants). During the following decades, particularly from 1880 until the 1910s, emigration to the Americas also contributed to rural out-migration, although only in Ireland its impact was larger than that of internal migration to urban localities.

While the consolidation of industrialization in North and Western Europe was starting to cause rural depopulation, the Mediterranean and Eastern periphery were still experiencing a significant growth of rural population, primarily as a result of the later development of industrialization in countries like Italy, Spain, and Romania. That emerging industrialization process caused an increase in the urban demand for labor, but the natural growth of the rural population still exceeded out-migration. However, the situation changed after World War II, when most of Europe entered an accelerated industrialization and urbanization process, part of a larger trend within the developed world.

During the late 1940s and especially during the 1950s and 1960s, Southern European countries culminated their processes of industrialization, and they did so at a more rapid pace

19 Ibid.
than that previously experienced by their North and Western counterparts at a comparable stage of development. This accelerated process implied massive flows of agricultural labor towards other sectors (such as industry, construction, etc.). As in the countries that developed earlier, rural depopulation affected more deeply marginalized, mountainous rural areas where the aforementioned emerging sectors did not develop.

In this regard, the evolution of those marginal areas relied precisely on the transformations brought by industrialization. In the regions where neither agrarian specialization nor industrial development took place, the impact of depopulation was especially severe. For instance, according to Collantes, in the Spanish uplands over a half of the census-type occupational change that took place during the 1950-91 period was due to out-migration rather than the expansion of other sectors in the rural economy. Only in very few areas throughout Europe, such as the Swiss Alps, did the occupational change brought by industrialization provoke a growth in rural population. In this particular case, and also in some areas of the Pyrenees, the gross population growth from 1850 to 2000 was due precisely to the development of non-agricultural sectors, such as manufacturing, large-scale winter tourism, and small-scale rural tourism, among others. However, in most of the mountainous, marginalized rural areas of Europe, industrialization caused depopulation.

The effects of the phenomenon have been manifold. For instance, due to the differential rates of outmigration by the poorest members of rural communities, the traditional income gap between mountain and non-mountain areas has significantly decreased throughout Europe. In the case of Spain, for instance, that income gap was reduced from 29% in 1970 to around 9% in 1999. However, at the same time the rural out-migration that occurred in these marginalized areas has also provoked an ongoing abandonment of agricultural land and farming practices. This phenomenon is especially remarkable, not only because it is already causing environmental and conservation problems, but also because agricultural abandonment has already changed the

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21 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
traditional occupational structure of European mountainous rural areas, causing a considerable reduction of the share of agriculture in the rural economy.\textsuperscript{28} In the case of Spain, for instance, agriculture’s share in the employment of mountainous zones decreased from around 80\% in 1960 to around 40\% in 1981, and finally to just 16\% in 2001.\textsuperscript{29}

This change in the preeminence of agriculture as the primary economic sector in rural areas is the most significant transformation provoked by rural depopulation, as it challenges the common identification of ‘rural’ with ‘agricultural.’ Certainly, agriculture is still a character-defining feature of rural Europe, but it is not the primary one. Although extensive research and data has pointed out this phenomenon, it seems that there is still an over-representation of agriculture not only in the common idea of European ‘rurality,’ but also in the political understanding of the ‘rural.’ Indeed, several authors have claimed that agricultural interests, considering its actual share in the rural economy, are probably over-represented in the European rural development policy.\textsuperscript{30}  \textsuperscript{31}  \textsuperscript{32} This issue, a crucial argument for this thesis, is the subject of a thorough analysis in Chapter 4.

\subsection*{2.3. The Depopulation of Rural Spain (1950-presentt)}

The depopulation of rural Spain represented one of the “most extreme episodes of rural depopulation in Europe.”\textsuperscript{33} The phenomenon was widespread, but as everywhere else in the continent, it affected more intensely the mountainous rural areas. According to Collantes, no marginal region in Europe (with the exception of some parts of the Apennines) witnessed a demographic crisis “anywhere near as severe as that of the inland ranges in Spain.”\textsuperscript{34} In these areas, very little capital was invested to develop manufacturing, industry, tourism, or other non-agricultural sectors when industrialization began to develop in the 1950s. That lack of employment in other economic activities, along with the decrease in the required workforce

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{28} Collantes, Fernando, “Exit…” \textit{Op. cit.}, 391.
\item\textsuperscript{29} Collantes, Fernando, “Exit…” \textit{Op. cit.}, 388.
\item\textsuperscript{32} Collantes, Fernando, “Exit…” \textit{Op. cit.}, 392.
\item\textsuperscript{34} Collantes, Fernando, “Farewell…” \textit{Op. cit.}, 271.
\end{itemize}
derived from the mechanization of agriculture itself, provoked a rapid depopulation of the Spanish inland ranges, whose population reduced by half in four decades, from 600,000 inhabitants in 1950 to around 300,000 in 1991.\textsuperscript{35}

There are several reasons behind this particularly great impact of depopulation in Spain. Among them, it is important to note that Spain is the second largest country in the European Union (after France), and also that around 60% of its territory is located at over 600 meters above sea level, making it the second highest country in Europe.\textsuperscript{36} Spain is also the second country in total mountain area in Europe (after Norway, which is not a member of the European Union), ranking 8\textsuperscript{th} in percentage of mountain areas (57%). In fact, even despite the depopulation of marginalized mountainous areas, Spain still has the second largest European mountain population in absolute terms (after Italy, see Table 2.2.). These particular characteristics of the Spanish territory (Figure 2.1.) were crucial to determine the special impact that rural depopulation had in Spain in comparison to other countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.2: Top Ten European countries according to total mountain area and population.\textsuperscript{37}</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mountain area (km\textsuperscript{2})</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
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<td>UK</td>
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<td>Austria</td>
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\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs, The Environmental Profile of Spain 2010 (Madrid, Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs, 2011), 34.
\textsuperscript{37} Nordic Centre for Spatial Development, Mountain Areas in Europe: Analysis of mountain areas in EU member states, acceding and other European countries (European Commission, 2004), Table 3.4., http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/montagne/mount4.pdf
As everywhere else in Europe, the Spanish population grew significantly from 1850 onwards. According to official data, from 1860 to 1991 it did so by 250%. However, while the urban population grew over 570%, in some rural areas it grew only by 14%, while in the rural

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38 Nordic Centre for Spatial Development, *Op. cit.*, Figure 3.4.
mountainous areas it decreased by an average of 21% (although in some other areas its decrease was considerably greater, such as in the case of the study area described later in this chapter). In this context, while the population of the mountain rural areas represented 27% of the total Spanish population in 1850, at the end of the twentieth century it represented a mere 9%. As in other Southern European countries, the process of rural depopulation in Spain was especially acute in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, a period in which the rate of annual growth of the Spanish economy increased from 0.7% to 5.4%. The implementation of a series of development plans (“Planes de Desarrollo”) crafted by Franco’s dictatorial regime (and specifically by the so-called “technocrats” that entered the government in the late 1950s) led to unprecedented growth of the economy as well as the consolidation of industrialization.

Although rural depopulation slowed down after 1975 (due primarily to deceleration of the economy caused by the 1970s Oil Crisis), the tendency to depopulate of Spanish rural areas did continue. This occurred regardless of major social and political changes in the country, such as its transition back to democracy in 1978 and its incorporation into the European Union in 1986. In fact, the phenomenon was already perceived as a problem when the 1978 Constitution was conceived. In particular, its Section 130 specifies that “public authorities shall promote the modernization and development of all economic sectors and, in particular, of agriculture, livestock raising, fishing and handicrafts, in order to bring the standard of living of all Spaniards up to the same level,” and it explicitly states that “for the same purpose, special treatment shall be given to mountain areas.” However, neither this specific mentioning to the necessity to intervene in mountainous rural areas, nor the political decentralization brought about by the Constitution have been able to revert the trend of depopulation.

2.3.1. Characterization of the Spanish Rural Population

As of 2015, the population of Spain (over 46.6 million people) is distributed very unevenly throughout the country, with the most densely populated areas laying on the periphery (with the exception of Madrid). In this sense, four out of the seventeen regions (“comunidades

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40 Ibid.
42 Tussell, Javier, Dictadura franquista y democracia, 1939-2004 (Barcelona: Crítica, 2005).
43 SPAIN, Constitution of 1978, Section 130.
autónomas”) in which the country is divided host over 58% of Spain’s total population (Andalusia, Catalonia, Madrid, and Valencia), despite the fact that they occupy barely 30% of the territory. Similarly, most of the larger municipalities are also located in the periphery (Figure 2.2). While, as of 2015, over 87% of the total population lived in municipalities with a population over 5,000 inhabitants, those municipalities with a population below that number actually represented over 84% of the Spanish municipalities.

According to section 3 of the Spanish Law 45/2007 for the Sustainable Development of Rural Areas (“Ley 45/2007 para el Desarrollo Sostenible del Medio Rural”) the threshold of 5,000 inhabitants defines a “small rural municipality.” However, the analysis of those municipalities under 5,000 people reveals that indeed 57% of them have less than 500 inhabitants. In fact, the 3,897 Spanish municipalities under 500 inhabitants represent almost 48%

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44 Ibid.
45 Figure drawn using data from Instituto Nacional de Estadística, “Cifras oficiales de población resultantes de la revisión del Padrón municipal a 1 de enero,” http://www.ine.es/jaxi/menu.do?type=pcaxis&path=%2Ft20%2Ft260&file=inebase
of the total municipalities in the country, but they host a mere 1.6% (734,000 people) of the total Spanish population (Graphs 2.1. and 2.2.).

Graph 2.1: Number of Spanish municipalities according to their population, 2015.\[47\]

[Graph showing the number of Spanish municipalities by population size, 2015.]

Graph 2.2: Distribution of the Spanish population (in percentage) according to the size of the municipality, 2015.\[48\]

[Graph showing the percentage of the Spanish population by municipality size, 2015.]


\[48\] Ibid.
Furthermore, the estimated average size of these municipalities shows how they are even smaller than they seem to be. In the case of the municipalities under 100 people, the average size is 59 inhabitants. There are around 72,000 people living in over 1,200 of these villages. In the case of 101-to-500-people municipalities, the average size is 249 inhabitants. Despite an increase of Spanish population of over 15% from 2000 to 2015, in the same period the average size of the municipalities under 500 people decreased. This was the result of an increase in the number of these municipalities (+90 since 2000) and a decrease in the number of people living in them (around 50,000 people less since 2000). As a result, since 2000 rural municipalities under 500 people have increased in number, but decreased in population.

At the same time, the ongoing process of rural depopulation is also affecting the population pyramid of small municipalities, which are becoming older and disproportionately male. While aging is occurring throughout the entire country (although with more emphasis on rural areas), the demographic masculinization is exclusively a rural issue. In fact, men represent just 49.1% of the total Spanish population, but in those municipalities under 100 people, men account for over 56.7% of the population. In municipalities between 100 and 500 people, the percentage is around 53.3%. Only in those municipalities over 5,000 people is the percentage of men and women in balance (50.1% of men and 49.9% of women). In towns of 5,000 inhabitants and up, women are the majority, reaching up to 52.5% in municipalities over 500,000 people. Exactly as had occurred with the decrease in size of small rural municipalities, the demographic masculinization of their population has also increased since 2000. In the case of the smallest municipalities (under 100 people), the percentage of men in the population has risen from 53.6% in 2000 to the aforementioned 56.7% in 2015. This demographic shift of rural municipalities is in itself greatly contributing to the depopulation phenomenon, as the chances for natural growth are being reduced.

The negative evolution of the Spanish rural population led scholars to define the idea of the so-called ‘demographic desert threshold,’ a population density value that has been estimated as 10 people per square kilometer (~26 pop./sq. mi.). Under that threshold, it is unlikely that rural communities can experience population growth, and in contrast it is very likely that they

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experience depopulation and eventually disappear. Most of inland Spain is indeed under that threshold (Figure 2.3). The comparison between Figure 2.3 and Figure 2.1. proves how highly mountainous areas actually correspond with highly depopulated areas.

![Map of Spain showing depopulated areas](image)

**Figure 2.3: Spanish municipalities with a population density under 10 pop./km².**

The analysis of this reality has been hindered by the common tendency to study population trends by province. In this sense, in an article published in *El País* in 2014, Luis Antonio Sáez (the director of CEDDAR, a research institute specializing in depopulation and rural development located in Zaragoza) commented that the provincial analysis of rural population is indeed misguided. Sáez cited the case of Guadalajara, which experienced the highest population growth among the fifty Spanish provinces from 1996 to 2013 (64%). Much of that growth occurred either in the province’s capital or in the municipalities closer to Madrid, while the rest of the province depopulated. In this regard, other authors have also argued for a study of depopulation by *comarcas* (smaller groups of municipalities), and even by newly defined regions that correspond with demographic boundaries instead of with political ones.

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51 Figure drawn according data from Instituto Nacional de Estadística, “Cifras oficiales...,” *Op. cit.*

2.3.2. Rural Population in the Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera

Among those unofficial regions that scholars are proposing in order to better understand the spatial distribution of rural depopulation in Spain, Professor Francisco Burillo of the Universidad de Zaragoza has described the so-called Serranía Celtibérica. The limits of the area are defined by the demographic features of the municipalities it includes. As such, the Serranía Celtibérica consists mostly of small rural municipalities, with a very low population density, located at a high altitude (the lowest areas are at 600 meters – 2,000 feet – above sea level). Professor Burillo has named the region recalling its past as the land of the Celtiberians, Celtic-speaking people who inhabited the area in the final centuries BC. However, scholars have criticized the connotations of the name, as well as Burillo’s insistence in relating the development of the area primarily to the touristic exploitation of its Celtiberian past. The term ‘Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera’ is proposed in this thesis to refer to this area (Figure 2.4.).

Figure 2.4: Delimitation of the Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera in the context of those Spanish municipalities with a population density below 10 pop./km².  

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Despite the controversy over the name and other aspects of Burillo’s proposal, the study of the area as a whole seems indeed quite perceptive. The ‘Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera’ spans five Spanish regions and ten provinces, covering an area of over 63,000 km² (twice the size of Belgium) which is inhabited by around 500,000 people. As a result, its population density is only comparable in the entire European Union with that of the Artic provinces of Lapland in Finland and Sweden, being in both cases below 8 pop./km². That value is indeed not only greatly below the average population density of Spain (93 pop./km²), but also fourteen times lower than that of the EU (112 pop./km²). As a result, the Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera have been recently described as “Europe’s most disjointed area.”

Although the depopulation of the entire region followed the already discussed common trends of rural depopulation in Spain, its proximity to many of the country’s large industrial centers (such as Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia, and Zaragoza) seems to have triggered its depopulation. As has been explained by Collantes for the case of Aragón, in the Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera, proximity meant that for those living in these rural areas “the costs associated with any move and the obtaining of information were comparatively reduced, in such a way that there was an increase in the degree of sensitivity of the migratory response adopted in the context of the low quality of life of the territories of origin.” This particular condition contributed both to accelerate and intensify the depopulation of the area, which was already less populated than the rest of the country when depopulation in Spain started in the 1950s. As a result, around half of the roughly 1,200 Spanish villages with a population under 100 people are located in this region.

In order to more precisely illustrate the region and its depopulation, as well as to provide a framework for the rural heritage study developed in Chapter 3, a thorough analysis of three comarcas located in the Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera is presented below (Figure 2.5.).

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Figure 2.5: Delimitation of the study area.
2.4. Case Study: The *comarcas* of Daroca, Jiloca, and Molina

The case of the *comarcas* of Campo de Daroca (province of Zaragoza, region of Aragón), Jiloca (Teruel, Aragón), and Molina de Aragón-Alto Tajo (Guadalajara, region of Castilla-La Mancha) is presented here in order to illustrate with specific examples the study of depopulation presented before. The depopulation of the municipalities in these three *comarcas* exemplifies several dimensions of the broad phenomenon, including its special impact on smaller municipalities, and its continuity throughout the 20th century into the 21st. The three *comarcas* altogether occupy an area of over 7,300 km² (~2,800 square miles), but their 150 municipalities host a population of just 30,000 people. In fact, the area’s population density is around 4.2 pop./km², well below the already described ‘demographic desert threshold’ (10 pop./km²). Indeed, the analysis of each municipality individually reveals that as of 2011 only 9 municipalities out of 153 have a population density over 10 pop./km², while the rest are below that threshold. In fact, there are 22 municipalities with a population density below 1 pop./km² (Figure 2.6.).

![Figure 2.6: Population density of the municipalities in the study area.](image)
The area was always scarcely populated. In 1900, the population density of Spain as a whole (36.9 pop./km²) was already three times higher than the population density of the study area at that time (12.2 pop./km²). Similarly, the population densities of the provinces of Zaragoza, Gudalajara, and Teruel, where these comarcas are located, were respectively 2, 1.3, and 1.4 times higher. However, the gap between those numbers grew exponentially during the 20th century. The area is today not only less populated than it was in 1900, but also greatly less populated compared to the national and provincial contexts. As of 2011, the population density of Spain is over 22 times higher than the population density of the study area. Similarly, the population densities of the provinces of Zaragoza, Guadalajara, and Teruel are 13.4, 5, and 2.3 times higher than the population density of Daroca, Jiloca, and Molina (Graph 2.3).

A closer analysis of the population’s changes in the study area also reflects how it grew slightly during the first three decades of the 20th century, reaching its peak in 1930 (98,336 inhabitants, Graph 2.4.). Like other rural areas of Spain, the comarcas of Daroca, Jiloca, and Molina started to lose population right after the devastating Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), to the point that in the 1950s the population of the area was lower than that of 1910. From then on, due to the already described impact of the Planes de Desarrollo, the population loss increased.

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60 Graph created using data from Instituto Nacional de Estadística, “Alteraciones de los municipios en los Censos de Población desde 1842,” [http://www.ine.es/intercensal/](http://www.ine.es/intercensal/)
exponentially. During the 1960s, the whole area fell below the demographic desert threshold (Graph 2.5.). In fact, in just a decade (1960-1970) the area lost over 30% of its population. In that same period, the population of Spain grew over 11%. If the study area had grown as much as Spain did during the 1900-2011 period, today it would have over 225,000 inhabitants, 7.3 times its current population.

Graph 2.4: Evolution of the population in the study area, 1900-2011.61

Graph 2.5: Evolution of the population density in the study area, 1900-2011.62

61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
The municipalities in the area are located at an average height of 1076 meters above sea level, and the comparison of their population evolution with that of Spain and the provinces of Zaragoza, Guadalajara, and Teruel reveals the aforementioned marginalization from development and population growth of mountainous rural areas described by Collantes, as well as by MacDonald, Crabtree, et al. (Graph 2.6). From 1900 to 2011 the population of Spain grew over 150%, but that of the study area decreased by 65%. Along with Spain, the province of Zaragoza grew around 130%. As already mentioned, Guadalajara lost population until the 1980s, when the area of the province closer to Madrid started to develop. As of 2011, its accumulated growth from 1900 to 2011 is over 26%. Only the province of Teruel lost population in the 1900-2011 period (over 40%).

Furthermore, an analysis of the study area by municipalities shows how depopulation has tended to homogenize the three comarcas. Not considering the four capital towns (Daroca and Molina for their homonymous comarcas, and both Monreal del Campo and Calamocha for the comarca of Jiloca) in 1900 the average population of the municipalities in Daroca, Jiloca, and Molina were 498, 654, and 520, respectively. However, in 2011 each municipality in these three comarcas had an average population of 116, 168, and 140 people. While the municipalities in the comarca of Jiloca are still larger, there is a tendency toward homogenization of these shrinking...
villages (Graph 2.7.). In this regard, the combined average population per municipality (again not considering the capital towns) shows how the average municipality in the area in the 1930 had around 595 inhabitants. Today, 142 people live in that village (Graph 2.8.).

Graph 2.7: Average population of the municipalities in the study area for each comarca, not considering the capital towns, 1900-2011.66

Graph 2.8: Combined average population of the municipalities in the study area, not considering the capital towns, 1900-2011.67

66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
As is the case everywhere else in rural, mountainous Spain, the municipalities in the study area shrinking. The analysis of the localities that were least populated in each comarca in 1900 illustrates how the impact of depopulation was especially dramatic in small villages (Graph 2.9.). From 1900 to 2011, Castilnuevo, Torremochuela, (both in Molina) and Balconchán (Daroca) lost 96.3, 93.9, and 91.6% of their population, respectively, and they all currently have a population density below 1 pop./km². Bea (Jiloca) and Lechón (Daroca) lost 82.4 and 69.4% of their inhabitants, while Villahermosa del Campo (Jiloca) lost around 60%. In fact, other municipalities that were not among the least populated have experienced a tremendous population decline. In the entire study area, from 1900 to 2011 79 municipalities (out of 153) lost over 80% of their population.

Graph 2.9: Evolution of the population in the two least populated municipalities of each comarca in 1900, 1900-2011.68

In the whole area, only three localities grew in population from 1900 to 2011. These were Calamocha, Monreal del Campo (the co-capitals of the comarca of Jiloca), and Molina de Aragón (capital of its comarca). In the case of Calamocha, it did so by developing a competitive food industry, but also by incorporating eleven previously independent municipalities that became districts of the town from 1971 to 1981. In that period, the population of Calamocha increased from 2,683 to 4,764 inhabitants (an increase of 78%).69 Similarly, Molina de Aragón

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68 Ibid.
69 Instituto Nacional de Estadística, “Alteraciones de los municipios en los Censos de Población desde 1842: Calamocha” http://www.ine.es/intercensal/
also incorporated three municipalities in that decade, growing from 3,173 to 4,014 inhabitants.\textsuperscript{70} In contrast with Calamocha, Molina, and Monreal del Campo, the other most highly populated municipalities in 1900 have experienced a considerable population loss (Graph 2.10.).

Graph 2.10: Evolution of the population in the two most populated municipalities of each comarca in 1900, 1900-2011.\textsuperscript{71}

The case of Maranchón is especially remarkable. Like Calamocha and Molina, it also incorporated several previously independent municipalities (a total of four from 1960 to 1981), but that did not prevent it from losing over 85\% of its population. The town flourished in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century as a crossroads in the highway that went from Madrid and Barcelona, as well as a trading post for mules and horses. The reroute of the highway and the introduction of modern agricultural machinery removed the economic base of the town. The case of Daroca is also special, as it was the most populated town in the area in the 1900s. The town was affected by the population loss in the entire comarca, by its inability to develop industrially due to its isolation with respect to the main commercial corridors in the country, and also by the dismantlement of the railroad that once connected it with the cities of Calatayud and Teruel (which occurred in the 1980s). As a result, from 1900 to 2011 Daroca lost over 35\% of its population.

\textsuperscript{70} Instituto Nacional de Estadística, “Alteraciones de los municipios en los Censos de Población desde 1842: Molina de Aragón” \url{http://www.ine.es/intercensal/}
\textsuperscript{71} Graph created using data from Instituto Nacional de Estadística, “Alteraciones de los municipios en los Censos de Población desde 1842” \url{http://www.ine.es/intercensal/}
Finally, another cause and effect of the ongoing depopulation of the study area is the aging and demographic masculinization of its population. As of 2011, over 53% of the inhabitants of the three comarcas are male. At the same time, over 32% of the whole population is already 65 years old or older (and therefore retirees). In fact, the population pyramid of the area is a very clear illustration of the phenomenon (Graph 2.11). The pyramid is basically inverted, with a mere 13% of the inhabitants being 19 years old or younger, and around 34% being 65 years old or older. Curiously, 2% of the entire population is over 90 years old, of which 0.08% (24 people) are 100 years old or older.

Graph 2.11: Population pyramid of the study area, 2011.

The challenges derived from this devastating demographic scene are manifold. Among other issues, the decreasing size of the municipalities and their increasingly aged population are threatening the viability of basic public services. This challenges both the stay of the current population and the arrival of new inhabitants. The socioeconomic and cultural implications of the process are measureless. For the purpose of this thesis, the effects of the phenomenon on the preservation and conservation of cultural heritage are described in the following chapter.

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72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
Chapter 3

Rural Heritage
Image: Window of an abandoned house in Embid (Guadalajara, Castilla La-Mancha, Spain) – 44 inhabitants. Embid has lost 80.1% of its population since 1950.
3.1. An Introduction to the Idea of ‘Rural Heritage’ in Europe

The characterization of ‘rural heritage’ is, by definition, inherently linked to the implicit and explicit meanings of the ‘rural’ and ‘heritage’ ideas themselves. When combined, both concepts influence each other, excluding certain meanings while implying others. In this sense, the idea of ‘heritage’ may be used to refer to the specific concepts of either ‘natural’ or ‘cultural heritage’ (or to both, acting as a hypernym). Furthermore, ‘cultural heritage’ itself might refer to ‘tangible’ or ‘intangible,’ and there is even a recent debate about the existence of ‘intangible’ natural heritage.¹ In the case of the ‘rural,’ the multiple ideas it represents, their respective positive and negative connotations, and its common identification with ‘agricultural’ have already been discussed in Chapter 2.

That common identification of the ‘rural’ as ‘agricultural,’ both from a political and an academic point of view, has indeed traditionally influenced the understanding of ‘rural heritage.’ In fact, in 2003 the Council of Europe recognized that “until very recently, rural heritage was defined [in Europe] in very narrow terms. It was considered to consist of buildings associated with agricultural activity, and particularly with ‘minor rural heritage’ such as wash-houses, mills or chapels.” ² Instead, the Council of Europe proposed a somehow wider definition of the concept, characterizing it as only ‘cultural heritage,’ but including “all the tangible or intangible elements that demonstrate the particular relationship that a human community has established with a territory over time.”³ ⁴

This definition of ‘rural heritage’ was included in the “European Rural Heritage Observation Guide,” a document adopted by the Committee of Senior Officials of the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning (CEMAT) in March 2003. The guide was later presented to the European Union’s Ministers responsible for regional and spatial planning in September 2003, and it served to set out the EU’s understanding of rural heritage that would later influence other policies (such as the Common Agricultural Policy for the 2007-2013 period, as described in Chapter 4). Both the approval of the guide and its

⁴ Ibid.
elaboration coincided with an international debate on the broad definition of cultural heritage, in particular with the adoption of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO (October 2003). In this context, the guide emphasized that “the absence of monuments does not indicate a lack of heritage,” because “every community possesses archives, an oral tradition, forms of social life, persons with skills, etc.”

In the case of cultural, tangible heritage, the guide defined it as “the most easily identifiable part of heritage,” being composed of landscapes (the “result from centuries of human activity on the environment”); property (“buildings for agricultural use and those related to crafts or industry, holiday homes, or public buildings that are evidence of specific activities or simply of an architectural style”); movable property (including “objects for domestic use – furniture in regional styles –, for religious purposes – furnishing in churches and chapels –, and for festive events); and products (resulting from the “adaptation to local conditions and to cultivation, rearing, processing, and culinary traditions,” including plant varieties and local animal species, as well as more elaborate produce, such as wine, cheese, pork products, etc.).

In the case of cultural, intangible heritage, the guide characterized it as “assets that are inseparable from tangible heritage,” being composed of the techniques and skills “that have enabled landscapes to be created, houses and furniture to be built and local products to be developed;” the expressions “that are evidence of a community’s particular influence on its territory and, more generally, of a specific way of living together” (local dialects, music and oral literature, place names, etc.); and finally the local ways of organizing social life, including “specific forms of social organization, such as certain customs and festivals.”

These definitions of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and indeed the entire guide itself, were based on two guides on rural heritage published in 2000 and 2001 by the French Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (“Guides d’observation et de valorization du patrimoine rural”). As such, despite the broad understanding of the definitions proposed, some of their

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particularities seem to fail when applied to the whole European context. In the case of tangible heritage, for instance, properties are described as “buildings for agricultural use and those related to crafts or industry, holiday homes, or public buildings that are evidence of specific activities or simply of an architectural style.” The definition excludes, among others, the idea of houses in general (a subject of great interest in some countries, as it is later explained for the case of Spain) and religious buildings. The reasoning behind that omission is hard to understand, especially when considering that indeed “objects for domestic use” and “objects for religious purposes,” are actually defined as part of tangible heritage. Similarly, although it does not imply its omission, the inclusion of produce and culinary traditions within the ‘tangible heritage’ category seems to follow the French renowned interest in the topic (the “Gastronomic meal of the French” was listed as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010), but it contradicts UNESCO’s understanding of those practices as intangible heritage.

In this regard, the definitions of tangible and intangible cultural, rural heritage proposed in the Guide are probably too biased to successfully accommodate the diversity of cultural, rural heritage in Europe, which includes resources as diverse as English manor houses, German barns, Greek religious festivities, Italian hill towns, French chateaux, Spanish irrigator’s tribunals, and Portuguese raised granaries, among many others. Significantly, the EU has recently established a broad characterization of “cultural heritage” to inform its policy-making, defining it as “tangible cultural heritage (movable, immovable, underwater), intangible cultural heritage (oral traditions, performing arts, rituals), and digital cultural heritage.” In this sense, it seems that the attempt to differentiate cultural, rural heritage from cultural heritage in general is actually being detrimental to the construction of the concept, as the aforementioned assumptions about the idea of the ‘rural’ are strongly determining it. This is the case of the requirement of cultural, rural heritage to demonstrate “the particular relationship that a human community has established with a territory over time,” a definition broad enough to apply to almost every heritage resource, either ‘rural’ or ‘urban.’ Certainly, the environment is a determining factor in rural areas but so it was in the establishment of many historic European cities.

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Furthermore, the exclusion of the idea of natural heritage from the guide’s definition of ‘rural heritage’ is also problematic, as both types of heritage are heavily subjected to the demographic and social conditions of the rural environment. In order to avoid the connotations of the ‘rural’ and the omission of any heritage resource from the definition of ‘rural heritage,’ it seems that the idea of ‘heritage in rural environments’ (natural, cultural, tangible, and intangible) might be more accurate. In fact, in the current context of rural depopulation described in Chapter 2, the idea of ‘heritage in rural environments’ is particularly useful. As such, unlike the traditional understanding of ‘rural heritage,’ it allows to reference to those heritage resources currently located in rural areas that resulted from historic periods when the gap between the ‘urban’ and the ‘rural’ was not as acute as it has become since the 1850s. Those ‘non-rural’ heritage resources (from archaeological remains of Roman cities to Baroque palaces) were not inherently ‘rural’ when they were conceived, even if they are currently located in primarily rural areas. Furthermore, this understanding of rural heritage does not deprive it of its association to natural heritage, vernacular architecture, and cultural landscapes, as they can also be understood as heritage assets located in rural areas.

This idea of ‘heritage in rural environments,’ and the understanding of heritage as part of its current social, demographic, economic, and cultural contexts aligns with present academic and political claims for a more holistic approach to rural development, and in particular, with the use of heritage preservation as a potential tool for rural development projects. In this regard, this thesis argues for an understanding of ‘rural heritage’ that recognizes that all heritage resources (natural and cultural, tangible and intangible) may be used as assets for rural development, economic growth, social cohesion, and community building (Figure 3.1). As it is later described in chapters 4 and 5, the European Union (and subsequently the national and regional rural development policies that depend on its funding) has already recognized the conservation of natural heritage as a tool for economic growth in rural areas, for instance through the establishment of publicly-funded payments to farmers for their contributions to preserving natural heritage. It is within this context that this thesis argues for the extension of that recognition to cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible). The study of cultural, rural heritage in Spain, the significance of the heritage resources located in rural Spain (through the specific analysis of the study area), and the relationship between depopulation and the dilapidation of rural heritage are presented in the following sections of this chapter.
3.2. The Study of Cultural, Rural Heritage in Spain

Like everywhere else in Europe, in Spain the understanding of the cultural heritage resources located in rural areas has traditionally implied the concepts of ‘agricultural’ and ‘vernacular.’ More specifically, the Spanish scholarly understanding of ‘rural heritage’ (‘patrimonio rural’) has primarily referred to built, vernacular architecture, while the term ‘ethnographic heritage’ (patrimonio etnográfico) has been used to refer specifically to the intangible manifestations of cultural, rural heritage. As a result, the early studies of cultural, rural heritage in Spain addressed almost exclusively the vernacular architecture of the countryside, and it was not until the second half of the 20th century that intangible manifestations of heritage (traditionally studied from an anthropological perspective) were incorporated to a broader understanding of cultural, rural heritage.13

In this sense, the earlier works of scholarly research about cultural, rural heritage in Spain, produced during the 1930s, focused primarily in rural architecture and particularly in the rural house. The issue was first discussed by Fernando García Mercadal, an architect and scholar who was indeed the very first promoter of Rationalism in Spain.14 In *La Casa Popular Española* (“The Spanish Vernacular House”), published in 1930, García Mercadal defined ‘rural architecture’ as “all the constructions built in the countryside, whether with a residential or agricultural use.” 15 He pointed out that “in general, the history of architecture in Spain [had] exclusively addressed the great monuments, those built by people who had received technical training” while little attention had been paid “to the history of rural architecture, the art developed by humble people when building and setting up their homes.” 16 In this regard, García Mercadal valorized ‘rural architecture’ due to its strong interdependence on the climatic, environmental, and social conditions of the territory. As such, ‘rural architecture,’ like the emerging Rationalism movement that he promoted, tried primarily to respond to specific programmatic necessities through the

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16 “Las historias de la arquitectura española se ocuparon, por lo general, exclusivamente de los grande monumentos, levantados por gentes que habían recibido una enseñanza técnica, no siendo objeto del mismo fervor los estudios de la historia de la arquitectura rural, del arte que las gentes humildes pusieron de manifiesto al construir y acondicionar sus hogar,” in García Mercadal, Fernando, *Op. cit.*, 12.
use of straight-forward replicable design solutions. The high-pitched roofs of the houses in the Aragonese Pyrenees, for instance, help to evacuate the snow during the harsh winters, while the *borreos* (typical granaries of the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula), are raised from the ground by pillars not for aesthetic reasons but to hinder the invasion of rodents.

Along with García Mercadal, other authors such as Leopoldo Torres Balbás, himself the very first promoter of ‘scientific historic preservation’ in Spain, addressed Spanish rural heritage during the first half of the 1930s, also identifying ‘rural heritage’ with ‘rural architecture.’

The general focus of these studies was neither the aesthetic nor the folkloric value of the vernacular buildings, but rather the contemporary applications of its constructive and functional logic. As explained in Chapter 2, when these studies were being produced the Spanish rural population was growing, and the subjects of study (houses, granaries, windmills, etc.) were being used on a daily basis (and therefore there was not a major concern about their disappearance). However, the situation changed in the 1950s, when the depopulation of rural Spain began in earnest.

Although the study of rural heritage came to halt due to the strong impact of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), it was precisely the accelerated depopulation of the 1950s and 1960s that prompted a renewed interest in ‘rural heritage,’ both in its tangible and intangible manifestations. According to the new demographic context, the focus of the studies changed and special emphasis was put on the rapid disappearance of rural architecture and the rural way of life. In mountainous areas (especially in the Pyrenees), entire villages were being abandoned. In other rural areas, the new necessities created by the mechanization of agriculture implied huge transformations (and demolition) of rural architecture. Within this framework, the essential works produced by Carlos Flores (1973) and Luis Feduchi (1974) attempted to inventory and catalogue as many typologies and buildings as possible, paying special attention to photographing rural heritage assets in imminent danger.

Unlike the studies of García Mercadal and Torres Balbás, both Flores and Feduchi explicitly argued for the understanding of ‘rural architecture’ (and specifically ‘the house’) as both part and result of the landscape. In this sense, they identified particular landscape areas within Spain and studied the contribution of rural architecture to these

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landscapes from an aesthetic perspective. However, aware of their biases (like García Mercadal and Torres Balbás, Flores and Feduchi were trained as architects) they already suggested in their respective works that rural heritage should indeed be studied from a multidisciplinary point of view, considering not only the buildings (the tangible) but also the local communities and their traditions (the intangible).

After the Spanish transition to democracy (1975-1978), the multidisciplinary approach was popularized, and special attention was paid to the relationship of tangible and intangible cultural, rural heritage. The heritage legislation passed by the new democratic regime openly embraced that approach. In particular, the 1985 law for the preservation of Spanish heritage (“Ley del Patrimonio Histórico Español”), which replaced the 1933 law passed during the second Spanish Republic (1931-1936), included a specific title about the preservation of “ethnographic heritage.” 21 The law, which received unanimous congressional approval and is still in force, defined rural heritage as both tangible and intangible, focusing not just in its aesthetic qualities, but primarily in its ability to express “the traditional culture of the Spanish people in its material, social, and spiritual aspects.” 22 This multidisciplinary approach of the 1980-90s was notably captured in an ambitious monograph, The Vernacular Architecture in Spain (“La Arquitectura Popular en España”), published by the Spanish National Research Council (“Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas”) in 1990. 23

Among other issues, the publication discussed the future of rural heritage, with special emphasis on the actual viability of its preservation. In particular, José Manuel González Valcárcel referred to the preservation of rural architecture stating that “the lack of study and inventory of rural architecture, the disappearance of the way of life to which it was attached, and the fragility of the fabric of these constructions itself contribute to their special vulnerability to the aggression of today’s society.” 24 More generally, referring to tangible rural heritage, González

22 “… los bienes muebles e inmuebles y los conocimientos y actividades que son o han sido expresión relevante de la cultura tradicional del pueblo español en sus aspectos materiales, sociales, o espirituales” in SPAIN, Op. cit., Title VI, Article 46.
Valcárcel claimed that “the preservation of built, vernacular heritage poses several challenges due to its own nature, to the lack of knowledge about it, and to the scarcity of legal, economic, and social instruments that could allow for its conservation, adaptive reuse, and rehabilitation.”

During the rest of the 1990s, the decentralization of political power brought about by the Spanish Constitution of 1978 led to the approval of different regional heritage laws. These laws, which followed the foundations established by the 1985 national law, addressed and defined rural heritage from a variety of perspectives depending on the particular features of each region (“comunidad autónoma”), but in general all included a specific recognition of that “ethnographic heritage.” Initially, the new legal tools that were proposed tried to follow previous models developed in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1960s, such as the 1949 decree over the protection of Spanish castles, and the 1963 decree over the protection of carved coats of arms, rollos de justicia (public monuments where justice was administered) and cruces de término (monuments located in the borders between municipalities). According to these decrees (which are still in force), every Spanish castle, rampart, or military structure, as well as every carved coats of arms, rollo de justicia, and cruz de término acquired legal protection, regardless its state of conservation and legal ownership. However, in the 1980s regional authorities and scholars alike realized that the legal protection granted to castles and other resources had not implied the actual preservation of those historic resources. As a result, although similar measures were proposed during the late 1980s (such as a generic protection for the windmills of Castilla-La Mancha, Levante, and the Canary Islands) they were finally discarded for its foreseen scarce practical effects.

In fact, during the discussion of the new, regional heritage laws many other traditional preservation mechanisms were questioned, as they had proven unsuccessful. In particular, after the end of Franco’s dictatorship in 1978, scholars were finally able to openly criticize the dismantlement of the apse from the Church of San Martín in Fuentidueña (144 inhabitants, as

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of 2015). The ruins of the church had been declared a national monument according to a 1931 decree, but the apse was disassembled and ceded to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in the 1950s.29 30 What the Spanish Government received in exchange for the apse were six fragments of 11th-century frescoes that had been stripped of the wall of the Mozarabic chapel of San Baudelio in Castillas de Berlanga (6 inhabitants) in 1922. Paradoxically, it was the controversy provoked by the sale of those same frescoes that had led to the approval of the aforementioned 1931 decree that was supposed to protect Spanish heritage from despoliation.31

As suggested by González Valcárcel, at the end of the 1980s the recognition of rural heritage had considerably increased and new legal mechanisms had been approved, but the actual effects of those measures were scarce. In this context, the scholarly and public debates about the preservation of rural heritage shifted to address precisely the feasibility of rural heritage preservation. These debates have continued since, with the discussions revolving primarily around the idea of how to exploit these resources for economic growth.32 In general, public efforts have been limited, and they have been directed to the creation of employment opportunities through the development of vocational and youth training centers (“escuelas taller”). Private efforts, on the other hand, have prioritized the touristic exploitation of historic buildings within rural environments. It is within this context that this thesis also argues for the understanding of heritage resources located in rural areas as a tool for rural development, but it does so by specifically emphasizing their economic, cultural, historic, and social value.

3.3. Case Study: The comarcas of Daroca, Jiloca, and Molina

In order to provide a more specific illustration of Spanish rural heritage (i.e. heritage resources located in rural Spain), the case of the comarcas of Daroca, Jiloca, and Molina is described below. The study of this heritage resources is presented in the context of the heritage of the Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera. Within this large, unofficial region, each particular

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29 SPAIN, Decreto de 3 de junio de 1931, Gaceta de Madrid, June 4, 1931, No. 155.
31 Merino de Cáceres, José Miguel, and María José Martínez Ruiz, La Destrucción del Patrimonio Artístico Español: W. R. Hearst, el Gran Acaparador (Madrid: Cátedra, 2012).
area developed at different periods of time according to historic, socioeconomic, and political reasons. However, there are a series of common features that allow for a more general characterization of their heritage resources. This analysis addresses natural and cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible), but pays special attention to cultural, tangible heritage resources that have not been traditionally associated with the idea of “rural heritage.” This characterization does not mean to be exhaustive, rather to illustrate the significance of the heritage assets that Spanish rural areas treasure.

In addition, a description of the effects of depopulation on the preservation of rural heritage is presented, focusing particularly on the effects of the phenomenon on tangible cultural heritage, which have received considerably less scholarly attention than those on natural and intangible, cultural heritage. In order to illustrate the effects of depopulation (abandonment, looting and appropriation, and disfiguration by lack of awareness), a series of photographs taken in the study area are presented.

3.3.1. Characterization of Rural Heritage Resources

As has already been described in Chapter 2, the Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera is an unofficial region, defined primarily by the small size of its rural municipalities, its very low population density, and its high altitude above sea level. In fact, due to that unofficial nature and to its recent proposal and description as a subject of study, no comprehensive research has yet been done regarding its heritage resources. The definition of the area by Professor Burillo emphasized its Celtiberian past (including some existing manifestations of intangible heritage that seem to relate to it, such as the Móndidas feast in San Pedro Manrique, Soria), but no description of historic resources pertaining to other periods was provided. The Celtiberians did have an impact in the region, but the vestiges that their occupation left in the territory are considerably less numerous than that of other periods, such as the Roman, Islamic, Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque epochs. Furthermore, Burillo also paid very little attention to natural heritage, while the zone does include several protected areas of international importance.

34 Ibid.
The Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera host, among others, the natural parks of Barranco del Río Dulce, spanning six different municipalities from Jodra del Pinar (5 inhabitants) to Mandayona (339 pop.); the Cañón del Río Lobos, spanning five different municipalities from Hontoria del Pinar (707 pop.) to Ucero (61 pop.); and the Laguna Negra y Círcos Glaciares de Urbión in the territories of Covaleda (1,779 pop.), Duruelo de la Sierra (1,175 pop.), and Vinuesa (938 pop.). In the particular area of the comarcas of Daroca, Jiloca, and Molina, natural heritage resources include the natural park of Alto Tajo (Figure 3.1), spanning several dozen municipalities in the comarca of Molina. Furthermore, these comarcas host several zones that are part of the European Natura 2000 network of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive.\textsuperscript{35} \textsuperscript{36} These include, for instance, the Muelas del Jiloca in Langa del Castillo (137 pop.) and Murero (131 pop.); the Río Huerva y Las Planas in Herrera de los Navarros (550 pop.); and the Parameras del Campo de Visiedo in Corbatón (12 pop.), Alpeñés (21 pop.), and Pancrudo (112 pop.).\textsuperscript{37} \textsuperscript{38} \textsuperscript{39}

However, probably the most important natural area in the three comarcas is the Laguna de Gallocanta, considered one of the most important stopovers for migrating common cranes in Europe (Figure 3.2).\textsuperscript{40} This lake is located between the comarcas of Daroca and Jiloca and it spans the territories of five different municipalities, Bello (238 pop.), Berrueco (37 pop.), Las Cuerlas (50 pop.), Gallocanta (160 pop.), Santed (66 pop.), and Tornos (235 pop.). The lake is one of the seventy-four Spanish wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, giving shelter to 150,000-400,000 birds of 220 different species a year.\textsuperscript{41} Along with the main lake, the protected area around it also includes the Balsas Grande y Pequeña in Santed, the Laguna de Guiaguerrero in Cubel (189 pop.), and the Laguna de Zaida in Used (288 pop.). The lake of Zaida

\textsuperscript{37} “Muelas del Jiloca (El Campo-La Torreta),” Xilocapedia, \url{http://xilo.org/xilocapedia/index.php?title=Muelas_del_Jiloca_%28El_Campo-La_Torreta%29}
\textsuperscript{38} “Río Huerva y Las Planas,” Xilocapedia, \url{http://xilo.org/xilocapedia/index.php?title=R%C3%ADo_Huerva_y_las_Planas}
\textsuperscript{39} “Parameras del Campo de Visiedo,” Xilocapedia, \url{http://xilo.org/xilocapedia/index.php?title=Parameras_del_Campo_de_Visiedo}
\textsuperscript{40} “Laguna de Gallocanta,” Xilocapedia, \url{http://xilo.org/xilocapedia/index.php?title=Laguna_de_Gallocanta}
exemplifies the relationship between natural heritage resources and intangible practices that is common in Spanish rural environments. This lake of around 200 hectares is regulated by a 16th-century dam controlled by a junta of neighbors from Used (Figure 3.3). The land of the lake is divided into 1-hectare lots whose farming benefits are given to the oldest people in the village. Every year, the dam is opened or kept closed to allow the lake to be alternatively flooded or farmed in order to improve the agriculture productivity of the land (Figure 3.4). 42

This strong relationship between natural resources and intangible practices is also illustrated by the work of the gancheros, the log drivers that used to transport sawn tree trunks to Aranjuez (near Madrid) using the current of the Tagus river (Figure 3.5). 43 Although the transportation of logs along the river stopped in the early 20th century (when the timber started to be transported by trucks), the villages of Poveda de la Sierra (131 pop.), Peñalén (82 pop.), Taravilla (41 pop.), and Peralejos de las Truchas (153 pop.) celebrate a festival annually to celebrate this intangible heritage. Similarly, each year the town of Monreal del Campo (2,611 pop.) celebrates the harvest of saffron crocus, which used to be a significant source of income for many families until the 1950s. 44 In the comarca of Jiloca, the traditional pruning of black poplars, Chopos Cabecero, to allow for both the use of the timber and the maintenance of the tree, is celebrated annually in different municipalities such as Cuencabuena (44 pop.), Lechago (60 pop.), and Torre Los Negros (90 pop.). 45

These festivals are usually organized by locals and non-permanent residents, who collaborate to organize these events that often take place during the summer. Although the examples presented commemorate lost practices and customs, the villages in the comarcas of Daroca, Jiloca, and Molina have also been able to keep many unique traditional practices and customs alive. For instance, people in Monreal del Campo (2,611 pop.), Used (288 pop.), and Fuentes Claras (528 pop.) play Bolos every week. 46 The Bolos is a bowling game, traditionally played only by women, usually in public plazas or old threshing floors (Figure 3.6). Although

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43 Lindo Martínez, José Luis, Aranjuez y Cuenca Unidas por la Historia. La Maderada (Aranjuez: Ayuntamiento de Aranjuez, 2007).
this game does not have a religious component, the majority of the traditional practices that have been maintained in these villages do. For instance, every village within the study area has certain traditions associated with particular patron saints or virgins. In most cases, these include annual romerías (pilgrimages) to visit the chapels where the sculptures of virgins or saints are located. Some of these chapels, such as the sanctuary of the Virgen de la Hoč in Corduente (365 pop.), are locating in unique natural areas (Figure 3.7). Others, such as the Virgen de la Olmeda chapel between Used (288 pop.) and Santed (66 pop.), are the subject of religious pilgrimage for locals from many different villages. In this regard, the celebration of the feast of Corpus Christi in Daroca (2,113 pop.) is especially remarkable. The Fiesta de los Corporales has been celebrated since 1239 and it is considered one of the most important religious festivities in Aragón. The town celebrates the “Eucharistic Miracle of Daroca,” and the relic of the Corporales, usually kept in a richly ornate 15th-century chapel at the collegiate church of Santa María la Mayor (Figure 3.8), is taken out of the temple and displayed in a procession throughout the medieval streets of Daroca.

As has been mentioned, all of these intangible heritage practices exist within the context of extreme, ongoing depopulation. The preservation of these practices is therefore highly threatened in the near future, and so is the maintenance of the tangible heritage resources that both these comarcas in particular, and the Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera as a whole treasure. In this sense, it is interesting to note that the Highlands host three UNESCO world heritage sites, ranging from prehistoric times (Rock Art of the Mediterranean Basin on the Iberian Peninsula, inscribed in 1998) to the medieval era (the Mudejar Architecture of Aragón – 1986, extended in 2001; and the Historic Walled Town of Cuenca – 1996). Among these sites, only the unusually well-preserved medieval fortified city of Cuenca refers to a single location. Cuenca has over 55,000 inhabitants and it is the largest municipality within this unofficial region. The other world heritage sites, however, are composed of several heritage assets scattered throughout the territory (and even beyond the Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera itself), with most resources located in small, rural, depopulating municipalities. The preservation of these abundant heritage resources is extremely challenging for these municipalities.

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In the case of the Mudejar Architecture of Aragón, UNESCO recognizes all the buildings built in the style: “a type of construction with a unique technology developed over the course of several centuries (12th to 17th) thanks to the co-existence of cultures and the combination of forms and building methods employed by Christians, Muslims, and Jews, through the exchange of their knowledge and expertise.” ⁵¹ In particular, UNESCO mentions the extraordinary quality of the parish church of Santa Tecla in Cervera de la Cañada (311 inhabitants), and the church of Santa María in Tobed (243 inhabitants), located in the comarca of Calatayud. In the case of Daroca, Jiloca, and Molina, Mudejar buildings include, among many others, the Papa Luna palace (Figure 3.9) and the church of Santo Domingo in Daroca, and the churches of Baguena (327 pop.), Herrera de los Navarros (550 pop.), Mainar (152 pop.), San Martín del Río (174 pop.), Villafeliche (195 pop.), and Villar del Río (159 pop.).

Along with heritage sites recognized by UNESCO, the region also features many other historic sites of international and/or national significance, including many archaeological sites, primarily from the Celtiberian and Roman periods. In the Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera as a whole, these include the Celtiberian settlements of Contrebia Belaisca in the municipality of Botorrita (484 pop.), Numantia in Garray (702 pop.), Segeda in Mara (182 pop.), Tiermes in Montejo de Tiermes (174 pop.), and Valdeherrera in Paracuellos de Jiloca (590 inhabitants); as well as the Roman ruins of Arcobriga in Monreal de Ariza (222 pop.), Clunia in Peñalba de Castro (50 pop.), and Segobriga in Saelices (553 pop.). In the specific case of the comarcas of Daroca, Jiloca, and Molina, the Celtiberian settlements of El Castellar in Berrueco (57 pop.), El Ceremoño in Herrera (26 pop.), and Valdeherremos-La Azafuera in Riba de Saelices (111 pop.), are among the most remarkable examples.

The great majority of the historic resources in the area, however, were built much later, primarily from the Middle Ages until the 19th century. In this sense, it is important to note the role played by the Iberian mountain ranges after which the Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera are named, as they served as a natural political frontier between the different rulers of the territory. The Iberian cliffs, hills, and mountains were equipped with castles, ramparts, and fortified towns from the period of the Muslim-ruled emirates that appeared after the collapse of the Umayyad Caliphate of Cordoba in 1031, to the Christian kingdoms of Aragon and Castile.

whose unification in 1469 resulted in the creation of modern Spain.\textsuperscript{52} A huge number of military-related structures are preserved in the area, many of which are located or part of very small municipalities, such as the impressive fortified medieval towns of Albarracín (1,049 inhabitants) and Rello (17 inhabitants). Within the study area, the medieval towns of Daroca and Molina de Aragón (Figure 3.10) are the best examples of this typology. Furthermore, the border that once existed between Aragon and Castile, which runs through the three comarcas, resulted in the building of many castles, such as the castle of Zafra in Campillo de Dueñas (85 pop., Figure 3.11), featured in the sixth season of the popular fantasy television series \textit{Game of Thrones}; and the impregnable castle of Peracense (72 pop., Figure 3.12), among many others.

After the unification of Spain in the 15\textsuperscript{th} century, the former frontier was partially dismantled, although both Aragon and Castile maintained a certain independence until the early 18\textsuperscript{th} century. The lack of conflicts that followed the unification of the two kingdoms promoted an increase of commercial activities. The subsequent economic prosperity, along with that of Spain as a whole during the period, led to the development of the arts.\textsuperscript{53} It is around this time when the Mudejar and Gothic styles flourished in the area, with the Renaissance and Baroque styles developing in the following centuries. As a result, the area treasures palaces, churches, chapels and other examples of built heritage, often ornamented with rich furniture, reredos and altarpieces. Among the buildings, the aforementioned collegiate church of \textit{Santa María la Mayor} of Daroca, along with the churches of \textit{Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles} in Burbáguena (254 pop., Figure 3.13), \textit{Nuestra Señora de la Asunción} in Calamocha (4,764 pop.), \textit{Nuestra Señora de la Asunción} in Ferreruela (69 pop.), and \textit{San Miguel Arcángel} in Villarreral de Huerva (247 pop. Figure 3.14), are especially remarkable. In addition, the Gothic reredos of Anento (105 pop. Figure 3.15), Langa del Castillo (137 pop.), Retascón (79 pop.), and Villarroya del Campo (80 pop.) are excellent examples of pieces of movable heritage within the study area.

After the political reforms that followed the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714), and especially after the recentralization of power in Madrid, the study area started to decrease in importance, and very few building projects as ambitious as those of the previous centuries were carried out. During the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries the area grew in population very slowly, as it was


not able to industrialize due to a variety of reasons. Nevertheless, small attempts were made in this regard, such as the development of the open-pit mining of Sierra Menera in Ojos Negros (413 pop.), or the modernization of several salt pans, such as those of Armallá in Tierzo (38 pop.), and Saelices de la Sal (54 pop., Figure 3.16). In fact, the salt pans of Saelices de la Sal were of medieval origin, and their exploitation continued until the late 20th century.\footnote{Calvo Bonacho, Juan Antonio, et. al., “Caracterización hidrogeológica de las salinas de Saelices de la Sal (Guadalajara, España),” \textit{Sociedad Geológica de España}, 2013.}

As a result of scarce industrialization, agriculture and husbandry remained the primary economic activities of the area up until the 20th century. The heritage resources associated with these activities are numerous, including threshing floors, lambing sheds, drinking troughs, wells, and many other assets scattered throughout the territory. However, probably the most significant vernacular typologies in the study area are the\textit{ neveras} and\textit{ peirones}. The\textit{ neveras} (literally, “refrigerators”) were dry stone circular buildings used to store snow during the winter to be used throughout the following year. They were once common in the Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera, but very few examples remain today. Within the study area, the\textit{ neveras} of Badules (95 pop.), Used (288 pop.), and Villar de los Navarros (159 pop. Figure 3.17) are especially significant. On the other hand, the\textit{ peirones}, are a unique typology of these\textit{ comarcas} and a considerable number of them can still be found. The\textit{ peirones} are tall columns, usually made of brick or stone, topped by a small religious image. They mark crossroads, municipal boundaries, and places of religious significance, and they are usually along to roads (Figure 3.18). Although they are legally protected, according to the aforementioned 1963 decree over the preservation of carved coats of arms,\textit{ rollos de justicia} and\textit{ cruces de término}, in fact their conservation is particularly challenging.\footnote{SPAIN, Decreto 571/1963, \textit{Op. cit.}} Their exposure to weathering due to their location in the countryside, the lack of maintenance, and both the lack of funds and expertise at the local levels have resulted in the loss of many\textit{ peirones}.

The\textit{ peirones}, however, are not the only heritage resources in danger within the study area. In fact, the sociodemographic evolution of the\textit{ comarcas} of Daroca, Jiloca, and Molina threatens the preservation of all the incredibly diverse heritage resources (natural, cultural, tangible, intangible) that this area treasures.
Figure 3.1
*Alto Tajo* Natural Park.

Figure 3.2
Lake of Gallocanta.

Figure 3.3
Lake of Zaida’s 16th-century dam.
Figure 3.4
Opening of the dam of Zaida.

Figure 3.5
Gancheros del Alto Tajo.

Figure 3.6
Bolos de Used.
Figure 3.7
Virgen de la Hoz Sanctuary.

Figure 3.8
Santa María de los Corporales
Collegiate Church, Daroca.

Figure 3.9
Papa Luna Palace, Daroca.
Figure 3.10
Molina de Aragón.

Figure 3.11
Castle of Zafra.

Figure 3.12
Castle of Peracense.
Figure 3.13
*Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles*
Church, Burbáguena.

Figure 3.14
*San Miguel Arcángel* Church,
Villarreal de Huerva.

Figure 3.15
*San Blas* Reredo, Anento (detail).
Figure 3.16
Peirón de Guillén, Used.

Figure 3.17
Ñevera, Villar de los Navarros.

Figure 3.18
Salt pans in Saelices de la Sal.
3.3.2. The Effects of Depopulation on the Preservation of Rural Heritage

As has already been mentioned, the impact of depopulation on the preservation of natural rural heritage (i.e. natural resources located in rural environments) has been the subject of extensive scholarly research. Studies have proven the relationship between the abandonment of agricultural land, its subsequent spontaneous reforestation, and the increasing frequency, severity, and scale of forest fires.\textsuperscript{56} \textsuperscript{57} \textsuperscript{58} Similarly, scholars such as Eugenio Monesma have studied the relationship between depopulation and the loss of intangible heritage, demonstrating how depopulation may eventually cause the complete loss of oral traditions, social practices, rituals, festive events, and traditional crafts, among other examples of intangible heritage. However, very little scholarly attention has been paid to the effects that depopulation has had (and indeed is currently having) on the preservation of heritage resources located in rural environments.

Certainly, historic resources within depopulating, rural environments face several threats that are also quite common among historic resources located in non-rural or non-depopulating rural environments. These include, among others, lack of maintenance, lack of funding, and inadequate restoration efforts. However, it seems that the depopulation process experienced by a large part of inland, rural Spain is amplifying those threats while creating also three specific problems. These include the abandonment and collapse of historic structures, the looting and appropriation of building materials (usually related to their abandonment and collapse), and the disfiguration of historic resources due to lack of awareness and expertise resulting from the loss of critical mass in depopulating villages.

These three phenomena are described below, illustrated with photographs taken in several villages of each \textit{comarca} within the study area during the winter of 2015-2016. The villages that were visited were Balconchán (13 pop.), Berrueco (37 pop.), Gallocanta (160 pop.), Las Cuerlas (50 pop.), Orcajo (56 pop.), Santed (66 pop.), Val de San Martín (7 pop.), and Valdehorna (30 pop.) in the \textit{comarca} of Daroca; Bello (238 pop.), Castejón de Tornos (60 pop.), and Tornos

\textsuperscript{56} Collantes, Fernando and Vicente Pinilla, “Extreme Depopulation in the Spanish Rural Mountain Areas: A Case Study of Aragon in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” \textit{Rural History}, Vol. 15, No. 2 (October 2004), 149-166.
(235 pop.), in Jiloca; and Campillo de Dueñas (85 pop.), Cubillejo de la Sierra (52 pop.), Embid (44 pop.), and La Yunta (100 pop.) in Molina. Since 1900, these fifteen villages have lost on average 77% of their populations, ranging from a loss of 91.6% (Balconchán) to a loss of 57.3% (Gallocanta). Furthermore, the abandoned ventas (“inns”) of Bruno, La Lozana, and Zaida in Used (288 pop.), El Cuerno in Torralba de los Frailes (86 pop.), and El Puerto in Balconchán (13 pop.) were also visited in order to analyze the effects of complete depopulation.59

Although the pictures featured at the end of this section illustrate particular buildings located in these villages, the general issues they represent are repetitive trends that are occurring not only throughout the study area and the Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera, but in most of inland, depopulating rural Spain.

A. Abandonment and Collapse

The continuous decrease of population that small rural municipalities in Spain have experienced over five decades has led to the abandonment of a significant number of buildings. The modernization of agriculture made many vernacular constructions obsolete (such as threshing floors and their associated constructions), while outmigration inevitably led to the abandonment of a considerable number of dwellings, usually single-family houses. In some municipalities, entire neighborhoods have been abandoned (traditionally the humblest ones, whose inhabitants left first). More commonly, however, abandoned properties are scattered throughout the villages.

Abandonment affects all kinds of properties, from historically significant ones (Figure 3.19) to more modest, vernacular constructions (Figures 3.20 and 3.21). As the result of this process, in many small, depopulating municipalities, collapsed buildings have become part of their streetscape. Finally, as the ultimate phase of the process, extreme depopulation results in the complete abandonment and collapse of entire villages and hamlets. Although this has not occurred in the study area yet, it has happened in other mountain regions of Spain, with especial emphasis on the highest areas of the Pyrenees.60

60 Puente Lozano, Paloma, “Se Canta lo Que se Pierde: Olvido y Memoria de los Pueblos Deshabitados del Sobrepuerto (Huesca),” XII Coloquio de Geografía del Turismo, Ocio y Recreación, 2011.
B. Looting and Appropriation

As a result of abandonment, many buildings within small, depopulating villages are the subject of looting and the appropriation of historic building materials (ceramic roof tiles, arch voussoirs, ashlars, wooden beams, wooden windows and doors, etc.). In many cases, locals reuse these materials to make repairs to their own properties, but often it is outsiders, either antique dealers or construction companies, that loot decorative elements and construction materials from abandoned, collapsed buildings in order to sell them. The phenomenon occurs within still inhabited villages, but it is especially prevalent in uninhabited settlements.

Within the study area, this has happened especially to the ventas. Until the invention of the automobile, the ventas (“inns”) were establishments that provided accommodation, food, and drink for both people and horses travelling through the countryside of Spain. The change from horses to cars, and the subsequent decrease in the time needed to travel from one place to another, made the ventas obsolete. Some were transformed into modern service areas, but most were abandoned. As a result, the ventas, located in isolated areas of the countryside, are especially vulnerable to looting (Figures 3.22-3.24). Usually, doors, windows, and ceramic tiles are the first elements to disappear.

C. Disfiguration by Lack of Awareness

The aging, demographic masculinization, and shrinking of rural populations that has occurred in rural Spain during the last five decades has resulted in the loss of a critical mass in these small municipalities. The people who remain often suffer from a lack of awareness about the economic, cultural, and social value of historic resources, along with a lack of knowledge about construction or restoration techniques, and the loss of the traditional crafts needed to maintain many historic resources. As a result, even when funds are available to intervene in valuable historic and vernacular structures, often the result is the considerable disfiguration of these buildings by inadequate conservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse attempts (Figures 3.25-3.27).
Figure 3.19
Abandoned house.
Bello (238 pop.)

Figure 3.20
Abandoned house.
Gallocanta (160 pop.)

Figure 3.21
House for sale.
Tornos (235 pop.)
Figure 3.22
Looted building materials.
Venta del Cuerno (uninhabited)

Figure 3.23
Looted building materials.
Ventas de Zaida (uninhabited)

Figure 3.24
Looted building materials.
Venta de Bruno (uninhabited)
Figure 3.25
Disfiguration by lack of awareness.
Tornos (235 pop.)

Figure 3.26
Disfiguration by lack of awareness.
La Yunta (100 pop.)

Figure 3.27
Disfiguration by lack of awareness.
Cubillejo de la Sierra (52 pop.)
Chapter 4

Rural Development Policy
Image: Window of a partially abandoned house in Valdeborna (Zaragoza, Aragón, Spain) – 30 inhabitants. Valdeborna has lost 84% of its population since 1950.
4.1. An Introduction to Rural Development in the EU

The history of rural development policy in the European Union is intrinsically linked to the development of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the main regulatory framework for agriculture in the Union (at the European, national, and regional levels) since the 1960s. The CAP was initially adopted by the six founding member states of the EU (Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany) aiming “to improve agriculture productivity, so that consumers have a stable supply of affordable food,” and “to ensure that farmers [could] make a reasonable living.” According to Gray, the CAP was also a major political tool, the “linchpin for beginning the process of integration.” As such, the CAP did not only become “the major vehicle for the construction of European communal space and the codification of European common meanings about agriculture and rural society,” but it also “changed the image of the rural from a vague, indeterminate, national context-specific, improvised socio-linguistic practice to an objectified, publicly visible, formalized and generalized Europe-wide representation.” The CAP was therefore among the first European-wide policies whose implementation tried to transcend national boundaries in order to create a common ‘European’ vision and understanding of a particular problem.

As pointed out by Gray, despite the huge differences among the rural areas of the six founding states, there were indeed two shared features that eventually define the common ground for the CAP. First, the member states had already established their own national tariff mechanisms to protect farmers’ incomes and ensure food security, and each of them was already largely intervening in the agriculture sector. Second, all member states agreed in the cultural and political value of the image of rural society and the ‘agricultural way-of-life.” In this respect, “agriculture was the defining condition of rural space,” the encompassing concept defining the nature and values pervading the whole idea of the rural. This political European understanding of agriculture and the rural was in fact openly contrasted with other less-interventionist models, in particular with that of the USA. As stated in Perspectives for the Common Agricultural Policy in 1985,

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62 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
the EU argued “to maintain the social tissue in the rural regions, to conserve the natural environment, and to safeguard the landscape created by two millennia of farming. … An agricultural policy on the model of the USA, with vast spaces of land and few farmers, is neither possible nor desirable in European conditions in which the basic concept remains the family farm.” Instead, the EU argued for ensuring continued employment opportunities in agriculture in order to maintain the social tissue in the rural regions and avoid depopulation. The aforementioned ‘green paper’ stated that “agricultural activity, even if maintained by subsidies, is simply indispensable if depopulation of the countryside is to be avoided.”

The idea of agriculture as the character-defining feature of rural space, and more generally the broad identification of ‘rural’ and ‘agricultural’ soon pervaded any other European policies that referred to the rural environment. Consequently, the EU’s rural development policy has, since its conception, been part of the CAP, because it was understood that the EU’s rural development model should be primarily based on the promotion of family farms. As also pointed out by Gray, in the last fifty years there has been a continual reinvention of the ‘rural’ within the EU that has paralleled both the construction and evolution of the CAP and the expansion and formation of the European Union itself. However, the association of the EU’s rural development policy with the CAP has remained. A brief introduction to the CAP is presented below to better frame the evolution of the EU’s rural development policy itself.

4.1.1. The European Union’s Common Agricultural Policy

Launched in 1962, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the EU was defined as a “partnership between agriculture and society and between Europe and its farmers.” Half a century later, the European Union considers the CAP a huge success and the primary reason behind Europe’s food security. The goals of the CAP have been expanded to include the

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67 Commission of the European Communities, Perspectives for the Common Agricultural Policy (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 1985), II.
69 Commission of the European Communities, Op. cit., VI.
sustainable management of natural resources, the conservation of the countryside across the EU, and the maintenance of rural economy. Indeed, the current motto accompanying the policy states that it is “for our food, for our countryside, for our environment.”

During the past five decades, the CAP has evolved as the European Union expanded (from the six founding states to the current twenty-eight member states). In 1992, the CAP shifted from market support to producer support, and direct aid payments to farmers were introduced along with measures to encourage producers to be “more environmentally friendly” (the reform coincided with the Rio Earth Summit of 1992, which launched the concept of “sustainable development”). In 2003, a new reform of the CAP ruled out the production-based subsidies, and a direct income-support payment to farmers was introduced on the condition of fulfilling several environmental, animal welfare, and food safety standards. More recently, in 2013, the CAP was reformed again to “strengthen the competitiveness of the sector, promote sustainable farming and innovation, and support jobs and growth in rural areas.” Following the last reform, farmers are now being asked to adopt several environmentally-friendly farming methods, including the maintenance of permanent grassland areas, and the farming of at least 5% of their arable area in a manner that promotes biodiversity.

The current CAP (2014-2020) culminates the change from product-support to producer-support policy that started in 1992, and it also introduces a more land-based approach in response to challenges and factors that are considered external to agriculture. Among them, the European Union has pointed out the necessity of tackling “economic issues (including food security and globalization, a declining rate of productivity growth, price volatility, etc.), environmental issues (resource efficiency, soil and water quality, and threats to habitats and biodiversity), and territorial issues (demographic, economic and social challenges – including depopulation and relocation of businesses).” As a result, the current CAP for the 2014-2020 period develops a broader understanding of the role of agriculture and rural areas, and the policy has been described as

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75 Ibid.
being all “about rural communities and the people who live in them, ... about our countryside and its precious natural resources.”

According to the new CAP, the management of the European countryside is a “public good,” from which “the whole society – present and future – benefits,” while the “safeguarding of the scenic value of the landscape” is “in line with what the public wants.” In that respect, the new CAP does not only recognize that the “countryside provides the habitat for a great diversity of fauna and flora,” but also emphasizes the cultural value of the landscape, which has been “shaped by farming over the centuries.” For the first time, it is in this precise context that the income support to farmers is being justified: “Farmers manage the countryside for the benefit of us all. They supply public goods, the most important of which is the good care and maintenance of our soils, our landscapes and our biodiversity. The market does not pay for these public goods. To remunerate farmers for this service to society as a whole, the EU provides farmers with income support.”

However, while the new CAP understands the role of farmers in a more holistic way (beyond the maintenance of European food security), it does not include a similar broader understanding of rural communities in its accompanying rural development policy. In fact, the aforementioned identification of ‘rural’ as almost exclusively ‘agricultural’ that was part of the conception of the CAP in 1962 still permeates the 2014-2020 version, in which there is again an understanding of rural communities as basically and primarily farming communities. According to the description of the new CAP, “in all EU member states, farmers keep the countryside alive and maintain the rural way of life. ... Without farming there would be little to keep many communities alive and hold them together.” This emphasis on farmers and farming is coherent with the objectives of the CAP (after all, it is primarily a program of farming subsidies). However, it seems that an emphasis on other sectors and actors that are also essential to assure the viability of rural communities should be part of the rural development program, especially considering the already-discussed decreasing preeminence of agriculture within the rural economy.

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81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
4.1.2. The European Rural Development Programs

The EU’s Rural Development Programs (RDPs) are one of the two so-called “pillars” of the CAP (the other one being the market support and direct payments to farmers). However, while the new reform of the CAP for 2014-2020 has introduced significant changes in the first “pillar,” the key features of the rural development policy have remained unaltered. Among those unchanged key features is the fact that while the market and income support measures are among the very few common policies solely funded by the EU budget, the rural development programs are based in multiannual, national (and sometimes regional) programs that have to be co-financed by the member states. The CAP as a whole (including both pillars) requires around 40% of the entire EU budget (it was almost 75% in the early 1980s). For the 2014-2020 period, a total amount of over €362 billion has been allocated, of which around €278 billion is foreseen for direct payments and market-related expenditure (~77%), while over €84 billion is for rural development programs (~23%).

Those €84 billion are drawn from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), along with additional support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund (CF) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). In addition to the support of national and/or regional funding (and sometimes private funding), the allocated funds for rural development programs are distributed to the different member states according to the implementation of national and/or regional seven-year development programs that have to concur with the three-long term strategic objectives for the EU rural development policy for 2014-2020 (Table 4.1.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.1: Strategic Objectives for EU Rural Development Policy 2014-2020.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Fostering the competitiveness of agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Achieving a balanced territorial development of rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>economies and communities including the creation and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maintenance of employment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

European Commission, The CAP towards 2020: Meeting the food, natural resources and territorial challenges of the future (Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions), (Brussels: European Commission, 2010).
Furthermore, the national and/or regional programs developed by the member states must also be designed addressing at least four of the six common EU priorities for rural development as established in the 2014-2020 reform as described in Table 4.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.2: European Union’s Rural Development Priorities, 2014-2020.87</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Knowledge Transfer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Competitiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and sustainable management of forests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Food chain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting food chain organization, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ecosystems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Resource efficiency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction, and economic development in rural areas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notably, only priority six (Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction, and economic development in rural areas”) is not directly related to farming or agriculture. In fact, when analyzing the several areas of intervention or “focus areas” that each of these six priorities includes (Table 4.3.), it seems obvious that the European priorities for rural development are based almost exclusively in the agricultural sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.3: Areas of Intervention (Focus Areas) by Rural Development Priority, 2014-2020.88</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Knowledge Transfer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1. Fostering innovation and the knowledge base in rural areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2. Strengthening research/innovation links in agriculture and forestry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3. Fostering lifelong learning and vocational training in agriculture and forestry sectors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 2. Competitiveness. | 2.1. Facilitating restructuring of farms facing major structural challenges (notably farms with a low degree of market participation, or market-orientated farms active in particular sectors, or farms in need of agricultural diversification).  
2.2. Facilitating a balanced age structure in the agricultural sector. |
|---|---|
| 3. Food chain. | 3.1. Better integrating primary producers into the food chain through quality schemes, promotion in local markets and short-supply chains, producer groups and ‘inter-branch’ organizations.  
3.2. Supporting risk management on farms. |
| 4. Ecosystems. | 4.1. Restoring and preserving biodiversity (including in Natura 2000 areas and areas of High Nature Value farming) and the state of landscapes.  
4.2. Improving water management.  
4.3. Improving soil management. |
| 5. Resource efficiency. | 5.1. Increasing efficiency in water use by agriculture.  
5.2. Increasing efficiency in energy use in agriculture and food processing.  
5.3. Facilitating the supply and use of renewable sources of energy, wastes, residues and other non-food raw materials for the bio-economy.  
5.4. Reducing nitrous oxide and methane emissions from agriculture.  
5.5. Fostering carbon sequestration in agriculture and forestry. |
6.2. Promoting local development in rural areas.  
6.3. Enhancing accessibility to, and use and quality of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in rural areas. |

This approach to rural development of the 2014-2020 CAP contrasts with the previous rural development policy designed for the 2007-2013 period. Following the aforementioned CAP reform launched in 2003 and reflecting on the conclusions of the Salzburg Conference on Rural Development (November 2003) that argued that rural development could no longer be

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based on agriculture alone, the 2007-2013 policy proposed a wider understanding of the rural world. Consequently, one of the three major objectives or “thematic axes” of the policy (described in Table 4.4.) was the diversification of economic activities in rural areas.

### Table 4.4: Thematic Axes for EU Rural Development Policy, 2007-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axis</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Competitiveness. Increasing the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Land Management. Improving the environment and countryside through support for land management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Wider Rural Development. Enhancing the quality of life in rural areas and promoting diversification of economic activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, while the 2014-2020 CAP allows member states to discard up to two out of the six rural development priorities defined for the period, the 2007-2013 CAP mandated member states to spread their rural development funding between all three of the thematic axes (a minimum of 10%, 25%, and 10% for respectively axes 1, 2, and 3), therefore necessarily including actions beyond the agricultural sector. The specific measures to be undertaken under Axis 3 (Table 4.5) included not only the diversification of the rural economy into non-agricultural activities or the support for business creation, but also the improvement of the quality of life in rural areas in general, including a specific measure (323) about the conservation and upgrading of rural heritage.

### Table 4.5: Measures Under Axis 3, Wider Rural Development, 2007-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Diversify the rural economy. | 311. Diversification into non-agricultural activities.  
| | 312. Support for business creation and development.  
| | 313. Encouragement of tourism activities. |
| Improve the quality of life in rural areas. | 321. Basic services for the economy and rural population.  
| | 322. Village renewal and development.  
| | 323. Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage. |

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However, it seems that the development of Axis 3 was not very appealing to most member states. Although during the 2007-2013 period they were mandated to develop programs concerning the three axes, as highlighted in Graph 4.1, in fact 32% of the total public budget allocated for rural development was set aside for Axis 1 (Improving the Competitiveness of the Agricultural and Forestry Sector), 47% was put aside for Axis 2 (Improving the Environment and the Countryside), and only 12% was allocated for Axis 3 (the remaining 9% was used for the implementation of local development strategies, technical assistance, and complementary direct payments, the sometimes called “LEADER Axis” or “Axis 4”).

Graph 4.1: Allocation of 2007-2013 Total Public Budget per Axis.

Furthermore, among the five countries with the highest share of Axis 3 budget on total RDP budget (Bulgaria, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania, and Germany), their allocation for that objective ranged from 22% (Germany) to 36% (Bulgaria). In contrast, the allocation of funds by the countries with the highest share of Axis 1 and Axis 3 budgets ranged from 44 to 52%, and

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331. Training and information.
341. Skills-acquisition and animation measure with a view to preparing and implementing a local development strategy.

from 64 to 83%, respectively. A comparison between the countries with the highest share of Axis 1, 2, and 3 is presented in Graphs 4.2., 4.3., and 4.4.

Graph 4.2: Five Member States with the Highest share of Axis 1 Budget.\textsuperscript{96}

Graph 4.3: Five Member States with the Highest share of Axis 2 Budget.\textsuperscript{97}

Graph 4.4: Five Member States with the Highest share of Axis 3 Budget.\textsuperscript{98}

Axis 3 (Wider Rural Development) was the major objective to which the least rural development funds were allocated for the EU as a whole. Furthermore, it was the only axis that did not represent more than 50% of the total rural development budget for any member state. In this sense, it seems that while Axis 1 and especially Axis 2 were perceived as crucial for rural development (Ireland and Finland devoted more than 80% of their rural development monies


to Axis 2 “Improving the environment and countryside through support for land management”), Axis 3 was identified as a supplementary objective. Of the three thematic axes, Axis 3 was also the one for which more allocated funds were not spent and remained unused at the end of the 2007-2013 period.

For Axis 3 as a whole, just around 60% of the allocated budget was eventually spent (€11 billion out of €18.3 billion), ranging from 46% (Support for business creation and development) to 75% (Village renewal and development). In the case of the specific Measure 323 “Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage,” while €2 billion were allocated for it (of which €1.2 billion corresponded specifically to the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development contribution), only 62.5% of the programmed expenditure took place (around €1.3 billion), and consequently 37.5% of the budget remained unused.99 With the exception of those measures regarding “Training skills acquisition and animation” (which operated in a slightly different way), the implementation of Axis 3 is detailed in Table 4.6.

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>**311. Diversification into non-agricultural activities.**100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocated Funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main beneficiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy (1,002,711); Poland (542,206); Germany (419,106).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**312. Support for business creation and development.**101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocated Funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main beneficiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom (15,869); Poland (4,199); Finland (3,402).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**313. Encouragement of tourism activities.**102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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99 Ibid.
While Measure 323 was programmed in 70 out of the 88 rural development programs across the EU 27 (Croatia joined the Union as the 28th member state on July 1, 2013), five countries did not include it in their RDPs (Bulgaria, Ireland, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovakia). The measure was supposed “to provide financial support for conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage, aiming to enhance the quality of life and economic attractiveness of the rural areas.” However, the measure might have been perceived as a luxury that was considerably more successful among Europe’s richest countries. Over 67% of the rural heritage actions supported by the measure took place in Germany (the country with the highest GDP in the EU),

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106 Ibid.
while the actions of Germany, France, and the UK (the three richest countries in the EU) totaled almost 90% of the total actions in the EU, as described in Graph 4.5.

Graph 4.5: Number of rural heritage actions supported through Measure 323, 2007-2013.107

While the effects of the economic crisis that started in 2007 might have impacted the perception and implementation of Axis 3 among the different European countries (and therefore allowed those richer countries to keep their programs while the poorer ones, more impacted by the crisis, were not able to do so), structural handicaps surrounding the allocation of rural development funds might have also been decisive. The EU co-financing rates varied for each axis, with a minimum of 20% and a maximum of 50% (up to 75% in specially disadvantaged – ‘convergence’ – regions). The EU explicitly stated its preference for Axis 2 (Improving the environment and countryside through support for land management), with a maximum co-financing rate of 55% (80% in convergence regions, and up to 85% for outermost regions).108

The 2007-2013 policy was built according to the ideas that led to the 2003 reform of the CAP, agreed at the Berlin Summit of EU leaders of March 1999 as part of the ‘Agenda 2000’ strategy. The agreement was itself built on the conclusions of a rural development conference held in Cork (Ireland) in 1996, and it reinforced the EU’s rural development policy in several ways. For instance, it made it applicable in all rural areas of the EU, it also brought together several existing mechanisms and instruments into a single legal framework for rural development (Council Regulation, EC, No. 1257/1999), and it increased the financial resources for rural development.

107 Ibid.
development, introducing the aforementioned idea of the “pillars” of the CAP. Furthermore, the reform even suggested a broader understanding of the idea of the ‘rural,’ claiming that “the viability of rural areas cannot depend on agriculture alone.” However, despite that effort, the main emphasis was still put in agriculture, understood as the vehicle to protect the rural environment, produce safe and high quality food, and contribute to “maintaining the attractiveness of rural areas for young people and new residents.”

The relatively modest success and implementation of Axis 3 (Enhancing the quality of life in rural areas and promoting diversification of economic activities) during the 2007-2013 period, and the lack of emphasis on the same issues for the 2014-2020 period seems to suggest that the interest in a broader conception of rural development stated by European authorities in the early 2000s has somewhat decayed. At the same time, while the overwhelming emphasis on agriculture remains in the CAP for 2014-2020, the renewed and increased interest in the environment, sustainability, and climate change indicates that new agendas are pervading the European rural development policy. In general, this new arising vision of rural development considers agriculture as a tool for the preservation of the environment, and therefore understands that farmers are indeed the stewards of the European landscape. The extent to which this evolution of the policy is challenging other aspects of rural development and the possible introduction of new inputs and visions related to other European policies (in particular to the preservation of cultural heritage) are specifically discussed in Chapter 5.

4.2. Spanish Rural Development Policy

The need to develop a modern rural development policy in democratic Spain was explicitly pointed out in the Spanish Constitution of 1978. As has been mentioned, Section 130 specifies that “special treatment shall be given to mountain rural areas,” and that “public authorities shall promote the modernization and development of all economic sectors and, in particular, of agriculture, livestock raising, fishing and handicrafts, in order to bring the standard

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111 Ibid.
of living of all Spaniards up to the same level.” 112 The first outcome of Section 130 was the Mountain Agriculture Law of 1982.113 Although at that time Spain was not yet a member of the then “European Communities,” the law was modelled on the European Directive 75/268 to allow for its eventual accordance with European legislation, and therefore it made a strong emphasis on agriculture as every other rural European policy.114 In this regard, the law included a specific policy instrument modeled after similar European programs, the PROPROMs (Programs for the Promotion of Agricultural Resources in Mountain Areas), which did not become truly operational due to a series of practical and political reasons.115 In 1986, after the incorporation of Spain into the European Communities, the PROPROMs were discarded and all Spanish rural development policies, both at the national and regional levels, became completely dependent on the priorities and mechanisms set at the European level.

In 1991, the aforementioned changes of the Common Agricultural Policy and the specific identification of rural development as its so-called “second pillar” allowed for the appearance of the LEADER program (a French acronym meaning “links between actions for the development of the rural economy”). This Europe-wide policy tool was meant to support rural development projects initiated at the local level in order to create economic development and employment. The projects were managed by newly-established local action groups (LAGs) that functioned as “learning laboratories for the practitioners of rural development,” community participation, social dynamization, and cooperation.116 According to Esparcia, in Spain the LEADER program was “the very first policy designed to tackle social and economic deprivation in lagging rural areas directly,” it played “a very influential role in introducing more integrated, territorial, approaches as a tool for promoting rural development,” and it also helped to develop “a new democratic and co-operative culture in rural areas … in which rural entrepreneurs are acquiring an enhanced capacity for decision making.” 117 118

112 SPAIN, Constitution of 1978, Section 130.
115 Ibid.
However, as also recognized by Esparcia, the implementation of LEADER encountered several issues. For instance, regional governments used the mechanisms of the LEADER program “to enhance their legitimacy in the eyes of the general population and their constituent local authorities.” At the local level, the program was perceived primarily as a way to bring public funds into the area without effecting any real increase in rural development. In addition, the lack of preparation of the local agents that were supposed to manage the program led to the failure of the proposed development strategies in many rural areas. Furthermore, as pointed out by Collantes, at the European level “the rhetoric on rural development [of the LEADER program] cannot conceal that the budget share of the farm-oriented first pillar [of the CAP] was about nine times as high as the budget share of the second pillar [rural development] and that, in addition, farmers were still the main beneficiaries of that second pillar.”

In any case, in Spain the LEADER program was generally valorized as a positive experience. Following its model, in 1996 the Spanish government implemented the PRODER program (a Spanish acronym meaning “development and economic diversification operation program for rural areas”) in order to provide rural development funds for those rural areas that were not eligible for LEADER funds. Significantly, unlike the LEADER program, PRODER allowed for direct agrarian investments, which made it even more agrarian in nature. This program, partially financed with European funds despite being a national policy, was continued over two additional periods (1996-1999 and 2000-2006), parallel to the evolution of the LEADER program itself (1991-1993, 1994-1999, 2000-2006). In 2007, following the reform of the CAP, both PRODER and LEADER were dismantled. In the case of LEADER, its objectives were included in the so-called “Axis 4” of the European rural development strategy. A mere 9% of the total European RDP budget for the 2007-2013 period was allocated for that axis (€7.56 billion), which included not only local development strategies but also technical assistance to rural development projects and, more significantly, an undetermined allocation of funds for contingent, complementary payments to farmers.

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122 Ibid.
In Spain, the dismantlement of the PRODER and LEADER programs and the general reform of the CAP coincided with an increasing interest in rural issues at the national level. The government started to realize that the incorporation of the country into the European Communities, along with the decentralization of the power brought about by the Spanish Constitution of 1978, had resulted in the transfer of most of the national responsibilities regarding rural development upwards to the European Union and downwards to the different regional governments. The national PRODER program had been an attempt to somehow recover some of the lost responsibilities at the national level, but its effects had been mediocre. As a result, the Spanish government became aware that the role it had to play in rural development was that of a mediator between the European Union and the regional governments. In this sense, in order to somehow recover the national initiative and provide a framework for rural development in accordance with European criteria, in December 2007 the Spanish Congress passed the Law 45/2007 for the Sustainable Development of Rural Areas.124

4.2.1. Law 45/2007 for the Sustainable Development of Rural Areas

The Law 45/2007 was built into previous efforts that had been made at the national level to determine the necessity for a Spanish framework for rural development policies and programs. Along with the PRODER program, in the early 2000s a specialized working group of the Spanish Senate agreed that the achievements of the national rural development policies implemented before the incorporation of Spain into the European Communities (the aforementioned Mountain Law of 1982) had been extremely limited.125 In this regard, the 2007 law was indeed the first attempt in several decades to actually create a national policy that could provide a better framework for the implementation of European policy. Until then, all the measures approved at the European level were implemented in the national context with little adaptation.126

The Law 45/2007 laid the foundations for a national policy built according to the European priorities but adapted specifically to the political, territorial, and socioeconomic

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realities of Spain. The Law established the Sustainable Rural Development Programs ("Programas de Desarrollo Rural Sostenible," PDRS) as its primary policy instrument. These programs were supposed to be developed at the regional level, and their design had to follow both an "in-depth study of the rural environment focusing on demographic, economic, environmental and funding issues," and an "assessment of the rural environment’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis)." The Law also put particular emphasis on defining “lines of action,” including, among others, the creation of economic activity and employment, the construction and maintenance of infrastructure and basic public services, and the management of natural resources.

Although the Law did emphasize the necessity to sustain agriculture in rural areas (primarily through the European funding provided by the CAP), the general approach to the idea of the ‘rural’ in the document was nevertheless broader than the approach taken by the EU. In the case of rural heritage, the first sentence of the law explicitly recognized that rural areas in Spain treasure “all of the country’s natural resources along with a significant part of its cultural heritage.” In addition, the law included among its main objectives the “conservation and rehabilitation of rural heritage, natural and cultural, through public and private programs that promote their use in a sustainable way.”

However, although the law was generally praised both nationally and internationally for its multidisciplinary approach, its implementation has been scarce. Significantly, the law was approved at a time when the effects of the world-wide economic recession began to appear in Spain. Although over the following years the national and regional development programs (2010-2014, 2014-2020) were elaborated, the funding to actually implement those programs was considerably reduced. At the same time, although the Law attempted to establish a prioritization

127 SPAIN, Real Decreto 752/2010, de 4 de junio, por el que se aprueba el primer programa de desarrollo rural sostenible para el período 2010-2014 en aplicación de la Ley 45/2007, de 13 de diciembre, para el desarrollo sostenible del medio rural, Boletín Oficial del Estado, June 11, 2010, No. 142.
129 Ibid.
for the revitalization of rural areas, the requirements for the areas to be considered at the highest priority for rural revitalization (low population density combined with geographic isolation) implied that in fact the vast majority of the Spanish territory was considered in need of urgent rural revitalization (Figure 4.1).

![Figure 4.1: Revitalization Priority of the Spanish rural areas, according to the Sustainable Rural Development Program (2010-2014). The red color indicates the highest priority.](http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/desarrollo-rural/temas/ley-para-el-desarrollo-sostenible-del-medio-rural/2.Estrategia_desarrollo_rural_sostenible_tcm7-9687.pdf)

Since the approval of the law, the refusal of regional governments to carry out an additional rural prioritization assessment (in order to avoid the political consequences of doing so) has resulted in the development of many, very small, development initiatives that have had little effect. Furthermore, in an attempt to increase the funding for these actions, all of the regional development programs (some of which have specific programs detailed by comarca) have tried to comply with the requirements to receive European rural development funds. As a result, even if the 2007 law was not very agriculture-centered, the requirements at the European level have fostered the development of agriculture and farming related actions.

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133 Figure drawn according data from SPAIN, Programa de Desarrollo Rural Sostenible (2010-2014), Zonas Rurales de Aplicación del Programa (Madrid: Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, Medio Rural y Marino, 2010), http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/desarrollo-rural/temas/ley-para-el-desarrollo-sostenible-del-medio-rural/2.Estrategia_desarrolloruralsostenible_tcm7-9687.pdf
In the case of rural heritage, the requirements for European funding have resulted in a strong emphasis on natural heritage in the national and regional plans for rural development (2014-2020), keeping with the focus of the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy for this period.\textsuperscript{134} Similarly, by following the European priorities, only one of the ten primary objectives of the national framework for the development of European-funded rural development programs in Spain is not directly related to farming or agriculture (Table 4.7).

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
\textbf{1} & Setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services, and helping farmers to benefit from those services. \\
\hline
\textbf{2} & Investments in physical assets, in order to improve the overall performance and sustainability of agricultural holdings and the infrastructures related to the development of agriculture and forestry, but also the processing and marketing of agricultural products. \\
\hline
\textbf{3} & Farm and business development: business start-up aid for young farmers. \\
\hline
\textbf{4} & Investments in the forestry sector: afforestation and creation of woodland, establishment and maintenance of agro-forestry systems, prevention and restoration of damage, improvement of the resilience and environmental value as well as the climate change mitigation potential of forest ecosystem, forestry technologies and processing, mobilizing and marketing of forest products. \\
\hline
\textbf{5} & Agri-environment-climate payments for commitments going beyond mandatory requirements and promoting changes to agricultural practices which make a positive contribution to environment and climate. \\
\hline
\textbf{6} & Organic farming. \\
\hline
\textbf{7} & Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints, compensating farmers for the constrains of agricultural production in the area concerned. \\
\hline
\textbf{8} & Forest environmental and climate payments for commitments going beyond mandatory requirements and promoting changes to forest practices which make a positive contribution to environment and climate; conservation and promotion of forest genetic resources. \\
\hline
\textbf{9} & Support for the establishment and operation of operational groups of the EIP for agricultural productivity and sustainability; support for pilot projects and for the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies. \\
\hline
\textbf{10} & Local development, supporting the design and implementation of community-led local development strategies. \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Top Ten Priorities of the Spanish National Framework for Rural Development (2014-2020)\textsuperscript{135}}
\end{table}


However, despite the great dependence of the Spanish rural development policies and programs on the priorities set at the European level (primarily because funding is strictly attached to addressing those priorities), there is nonetheless an increasing national interest in a broader approach to rural development. In this sense, during the past two years the Spanish Senate formed the Special Commission to Study the Development of Policy to Prevent the Depopulation of Mountain Areas (“Comisión Especial de Estudio sobre las medidas a desarrollar para evitar la despolación de las zonas de montaña”). Among the main conclusions of its report, approved in July 2015, was the necessity to tackle rural issues from an interdisciplinary perspective. In the case of heritage, following the 2007 law, the commission explicitly referred to the contribution of the natural and cultural heritage resources of rural areas to the country. Moreover, the report asked for the valorization of these resources from an economic perspective, as potential tools for the creation of employment opportunities. Although this understanding of heritage has not yet pervaded national policies, it may do so in the near future. This particular issue is more thoroughly discussed in the following chapter.

4.2.2. Regional Rural Development Policy

According to the Law 45/2007, 84.5% of the Spanish territory is rural. However, the rates of rurality of the seventeen Spanish regions vary greatly (Table 4.8). In Aragón and Castilla-La Mancha, the regions occupied by the comarcas within the study area, the rates of rurality are 95.2% and 91.1%, respectively. These numbers contrast greatly with those of the Balearic Islands (38.6%) or Madrid (47.7%). As a result, the legislation, policies, and other measures that the different Spanish regions have developed in relationship with the ‘rural’ during the past four decades are also very diverse. Furthermore, the development of these policies has greatly depended on the cession of national responsibilities to the regional governments. This cession has occurred gradually since the 1980s, and has resulted in a similarly gradual approval of regional laws, such as those related to rural issues.

In this sense, it is important to note again that, since the incorporation of Spain into the European Communities in 1986, agriculture and rural development are indeed European concerns. As a result, the regional policies addressing rural issues have dealt primarily with regional planning and local governance.\footnote{ARAGÓN, Law 7/1999, de Administración Local de Aragón, Boletín Oficial de Aragón, April 17, 1999, No. 45.} In the case of Aragón, the first regional planning law was passed in 1992, and it was in force until 2009.\footnote{ARAGÓN, Law 11/1992, de Ordenación del Territorio de la Comunidad Autónoma de Aragón, Boletín Oficial de Aragón, December 7, 1992, No. 142.} Since then, the political confrontations over the issue led to the approval of two laws and a decree, the last of which was passed in November

\begin{table}[h]
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\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|}
\hline
Region & Rural Area (%) & Rural Area (km\(^2\)) \\
\hline
Andalucía & 79.6 & 87,590.68 \\
\textbf{Aragón} & 95.2 & 47,839.6 \\
Asturias & 85.9 & 10,603.53 \\
Baleares & 38.6 & 4,991.67 \\
Canarias & 51.9 & 7,442.64 \\
Cantabria & 83.5 & 5,252.58 \\
Castilla y León & 96.5 & 93,813.48 \\
\textbf{Castilla-La Mancha} & 91.1 & 79,409.09 \\
Cataluña & 78.4 & 32,090.5 \\
Comunidad Valenciana & 68.5 & 23,258.05 \\
Extremadura & 85.9 & 41,634.43 \\
Galicia & 84.5 & 29,574.42 \\
Madrid & 47.7 & 8,021.8 \\
Murcia & 48.1 & 11,313.11 \\
Navarra & 90.6 & 9,800.76 \\
País Vasco & 62.4 & 7,089.08 \\
La Rioja & 89.4 & 5,027.91 \\
\textbf{SPAIN} & 84.5 & 504,753.39 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}
Significantly, this last law aligns with the current national interest for a broader approach to rural development. In particular, the Law includes as one of its three main objectives “the promotion of sustainable development in the region [of Aragón], allowing for the management, protection, and improvement of the natural and cultural heritage along with the improvement of economic competitiveness, the strengthening of social cohesion, and the achievement of demographic balance.” In the case of Castilla-La Mancha, the first regional planning law was passed a few years later, in 1998. It was modified in 2003, a new law was passed in 2004, and then modified by a decree in 2010. The 2010 regional planning law, still in force, has a similar emphasis on agriculture and natural heritage to that of European policies approved at that time. Nevertheless, among its main objectives it includes the necessity to “preserve cultural heritage, historic and artistic,” and the “protection of architectural heritage, as well as urban and rural landscapes.”

The mentioning of heritage within those laws contrasts with the exclusion of the ‘rural’ in their respective cultural heritage legislation. As many other Spanish regions, Aragón and Castilla-La Mancha passed their regional cultural heritage laws during the 1990s, following the guidelines of the aforementioned national heritage law of 1985. Castilla-La Mancha was actually among the very first Spanish regions to pass a regional cultural heritage law and did so...
as early as 1990. The Law included references to “ethnographic heritage,” but not specifically to rural heritage, nor to the particularities of heritage in rural environments. Although the Law was modified as recently as 2013, the approach to rural heritage varied only slightly.

In the case of Aragón, the regional cultural heritage law was approved in 1999. Again, the Law did incorporate the understanding of ‘ethnographic heritage’ derived from the national law, but no specific mentions of rural heritage in a broader sense. However, in one of its additional provisions, the Law did make an explicit recognition of abandoned villages as heritage resources. As has been mentioned, these depopulated villages, especially common in the Pyrenees, were the subject of the constant looting of traditional building materials and decorative elements. In this regard, the Aragonese law specifies that “the uninhabited villages are part of our cultural roots and our traditional ways of life,” and declared it illegal “to take any building materials [from these villages] nor to carry out any construction works without an authorization by the Provincial Landmarks Commission.” Furthermore, the additional provision of the Law also states that “[the Aragonese Government] will promote an inventory of these villages and their gradual rehabilitation.”

Although the implementation of this additional provision has been very scarce, during the past two decades both the heritage laws of Aragón and Castilla-La Mancha have nonetheless resulted in a significant provision of public funds for the restoration of many heritage resources, located both in rural and urban areas. These projects, however, have been primarily carried out in a top-down manner, usually directed and supervised by the regional governments’ cultural heritage departments. In this sense, the lack of interconnection between heritage and other areas of regional concern (such as regional planning) seems to have prevented these restoration projects from acting as tools for economic development, rather than as purely goal-oriented, preservation actions. The reasons behind this are manifold, but it seems that the European

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understanding of rural development has promoted the lack of interaction between agriculture-oriented rural development and other areas.

Even when current legislation at the regional level is starting to argue for a broader understanding of rural issues, the requirement to meet the European guidelines and priorities in order to receive funding is greatly determining the final design of rural development strategies at the regional level. For instance, according to the 2014-2020 framework for the implementation of European-funded regional rural development programs in Aragón and Castilla-La Mancha, over 90% of their respective budgets for rural development in the period is explicitly related to agriculture, farming, and forestry. This is a direct consequence of the requirement for regional programs to choose their priorities among the European ones. As has been mentioned, from the six priorities for 2014-2020 only “Priority 6, Social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas” is not explicitly related to agriculture (see Table 4.2). In the case of Aragón, for 2014-2020 there are €84 million allocated for “Priority 6,” compared to a total budget for rural development of €907 million. In the case of Castilla-La Mancha, the total budget is €1.49 billion, of which a mere 5.1% is allocated for Priority 6. These numbers also contrast greatly when compared with the biggest budgetary measures for the rural development programs of both Aragón and Castilla-La Mancha (Tables 4.9 and 4.10).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.9: Biggest RDP Measures in Budgetary Terms - Aragón (2014-2020)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investments in physical assets, in order to improve the overall performance and sustainability of agricultural holdings and the infrastructures related to the development of agriculture and forestry, but also the processing and marketing of agricultural products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agri-environment-climate payments for commitments going beyond mandatory requirements and promoting changes to agricultural practices which make a positive contribution to environment and climate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments in the forestry sector: afforestation and creation of woodland, establishment and maintenance of agro-forestry systems, prevention and restoration of damage, improvement of the resilience and environmental value as well as the climate change mitigation potential of forest ecosystem, forestry technologies and processing, mobilizing and marketing of forest products.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Forest environmental and climate payments for commitments going beyond mandatory requirements and promoting changes to forest practices which make a positive contribution to environment and climate; conservation and promotion of forest genetic resources.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other measures</th>
<th>€250 million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Total Rural Development Budget for Aragón**  

€907 million

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Table 4.10: Biggest RDP Measures in Budgetary Terms – Castilla-La Mancha (2014-2020)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investments in the forestry sector: afforestation and creation of woodland, establishment and maintenance of agro-forestry systems, prevention and restoration of damage, improvement of the resilience and environmental value as well as the climate change mitigation potential of forest ecosystem, forestry technologies and processing, mobilizing and marketing of forest products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>€427 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Investments in physical assets, in order to improve the overall performance and sustainability of agricultural holdings and the infrastructures related to the development of agriculture and forestry, but also the processing and marketing of agricultural products. |
| €381 million |

| Organic farming. |
| €214 million |

| Local development, supporting the design and implementation of community-led local development strategies. |
| €76 million |

| Other measures |
| €392 million |

**Total Rural Development Budget for Castilla-La Mancha**  

€1.49 billion

In this regard, due to the strong dependence of national and regional development programs on the European priorities for rural development (after all, rural issues are legally an European responsibility) it seems obvious that the incorporation of historic preservation into rural development policies will not occur if there is not a shift in the European understanding of the ‘rural,’ and in particular, of rural heritage and rural development. The challenges and opportunities for such a change are thoroughly discussed in the following chapter.

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Chapter 5

Findings
Image: Window of an abandoned house in Bello (Teruel, Spain) — 238 inhabitants.
Bello has lost 81.3% of its population since 1950.
5.1. Introduction

The analysis developed in the previous chapters of this thesis demonstrates that historic preservation can play a bigger role in the European, Spanish, and regional policies for rural development. As such, its incorporation into the toolbox of those policies should not just contribute to the preservation of rural heritage per se, but also to the creation of economic growth, and subsequently to revert depopulation. In order to support that case, this chapter provides a detailed description of the primary findings of this thesis. The findings are listed according to their ability to prevent (challenges) or foster (opportunities) the incorporation of historic preservation into policies and programs for rural development. The analysis of these findings is presented in Chapter 6 in the form of specific research and policy recommendations.

5.2. Challenges

Undoubtedly, the incorporation of historic preservation into rural development policies at the European, Spanish, and regional levels presents a diverse series of challenges. Among others, there are problems derived from the lack of data and understanding about the ideas of ‘rural’ and ‘rural heritage.’ Furthermore, there is also an obvious misunderstanding of the ‘rural’ and ‘rural heritage’ ideas at the political level. Finally, even considering that new policies may be approved, there are also challenges to their success derived from the unfeasibility of implementing certain policies in the specific conditions of rural environments. These challenges, categorized as either structural, political, or operational challenges, are described below.

5.2.1. Structural Challenges

Structural challenges relate primarily to the lack of data and understanding about the phenomena of rural depopulation and rural heritage. This thesis aims to build more knowledge about the relationship between both concepts, an issue that has been the subject of very limited scholarly research worldwide. Undoubtedly, the lack of research about this issue threatens the whole rational ‘structure’ of the question, preventing a greater interest from policy- and decision-makers. These challenges include the mistaken political-boundary approach to the study of depopulation, the unfeasibility of heritage inventories, and the differential understandings of ownership and common stewardship.
A. Mistaken Political-Boundary Approach to the Study of Depopulation

Scholars in the rural studies field are starting to realize that the traditional approach to depopulation, according to existing political boundaries, is inadequate to provide a complete understanding of the phenomenon. Instead, depopulation seems to follow territorial and socioeconomic conditions. In the case of Spain, scholars agree on how the provincial analysis actually hinders the reality of depopulation in provinces such as Guadalajara, where the population growth in the 1980-2011 period concentrated in the capital and the towns closer to Madrid, while the mountaneous, isolated areas of the province continued to depopulate. Similarly, the analysis of the comarcas of Daroca, Jiloca, and Molina developed in this thesis proves how the depopulation trends do cross political boundaries. In this case, the population of the provinces of Zaragoza, Teruel, and Guadalajara, where these comarcas are respectively located, evolved very differently from 1900 to 2011 (Zaragoza grew by 130%, Guadalajara grew a 26%, and Teruel lost around 40% of its population). However, the three adjacent comarcas lost population evenly (around 65%), precisely because their geographic and socioeconomic conditions were very similar despite their political adscription to three different provinces.

The application of geographic information systems (GIS) may allow for a better understanding of the phenomenon in the near future, but in the meantime this misleading approach to depopulation continues to prevent political action from taking place. For instance, the three comarcas within the study area occupy altogether an area of around 7,300 km$^2$ (~2,800 square miles), which is larger than 16 out of the 50 Spanish provinces.$^2$ However, no comprehensive plans for the area as a whole have been ever proposed, as they depend administratively on three different provincial governments (Zaragoza, Teruel, and Guadalajara), and two different regional governments (Aragón and Castilla-La Mancha).

B. Unfeasibility of Rural Heritage Inventories

During a meeting held in June 1983 in Aosta (Italy), representatives of the then 21 Council of Europe member states set the guidelines aimed to direct the protection of rural

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$^2$ The study area is larger than the provinces of Guipúzcoa (1,997 km$^2$), Vizcaya (2,217 km$^2$), Álava (3,307 km$^2$), Santa Cruz de Tenerife (3,381 km$^2$), Las Palmas (4,065 km$^2$), Pontevedra (4,494 km$^2$), Islas Baleares (4,991 km$^2$), La Rioja (5,045 km$^2$), Cantabria (5,321 km$^2$), Alicante (5,817 km$^2$), Gerona (5,909 km$^2$), Tarragona (6,302 km$^2$), Castellón (6,636 km$^2$), Segovia (6,920 km$^2$), Orense (7,273 km$^2$), and Málaga (7,306 km$^2$).
heritage in Europe. Among other considerations, the final document that resulted from the meeting stated that “models for rehabilitation and protection … must be based first and foremost on thorough surveys and inventories of the rural heritage which can still be saved, bearing in mind the changes which have occurred and the economic needs of the population in agricultural areas.” 3 4 Surely, inventories are a very useful tool, but the overwhelming number of historic resources located in rural areas (as described in Chapter 3) may indeed compromise the feasibility of developing such documents. Similarly, the limited effects of legal mechanisms such as the Spanish 1949 decree over the protection of castles, and the 1963 decree over the protection of all carved coats of arms, rollos de justicia and cruces de término have already been discussed.5 6 It seems that traditional historic preservation mechanisms are inadequate to respond to the particular features and conditions of heritage in rural areas.

If historic preservation is to be included as a tool for rural development, historic resources should indeed be categorized according not only to their historic, cultural, and social significance, but also to their potential to foster and contribute to rural development and economic growth. In this scenario, inventories and catalogues should be developed on a territorial basis, according to the development of territorial rural development plans. This new approach, however, would also create new challenges (particularly derived from the prioritization of some heritage resources instead of others) that should necessarily be addressed through open, participatory processes of plan- and decision-making.

C. Differential Understandings of Ownership and Common Stewardship

The case of the Ecce Homo that served to illustrate the introduction to this thesis provides a great example of the informal common stewardship of heritage in rural Spain. The small 16th century sanctuary of the Virgen de Misericordia in the town Borja, where the Ecce Homo fresco is located, is maintained by members of the local community, primarily women. It is they who mop the floors, wipe the benches, and replace the consumed candles. They do so moved both by a

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4 It is interesting to know the use of ‘agricultural’ as a synonym of ‘rural.’
strong religious sentiment and by a feeling of responsibility towards their local heritage. However, this understanding of common stewardship, usually related to religious heritage, has also recently come into conflict with the ideas of legal ownership and private property.

During the last few years, there has been an increasing concern among local communities and authorities throughout Spain regarding the real estate register of churches, small chapels, hermitages, cemeteries, parish houses, and other religious properties (including for instance the Mosque-Cathedral of Cordoba, a UNESCO world heritage site since 1984) by the Catholic Church. The real estate registration was possible due to a law passed during Franco’s dictatorship in 1946 that was partially modified during the conservative government of José María Aznar in 1998. Until then, religious buildings had been considered part of the public domain, and therefore they were not officially registered. However, in 1998, the change in the law allowed the Catholic Church to register religious buildings as private property. The registration encountered strong opposition in small municipalities, and particularly in the region of Navarra, where the archdiocese of Pamplona-Tudela registered over 1,000 properties from 1998 to 2007. In this region, a civic platform in defense of heritage (“Plataforma de Defensa del Patrimonio Navarro”) has been lobbying against the registration of religious buildings for the past few years. In April 8, 2016, they succeeded in gaining the support of the Navarre parliament, which has agreed on taking the church to court regarding the registration of religious properties, particularly in small municipalities.

Along with this case of the Catholic Church’s inscription of religious buildings, the understanding of common stewardship of rural heritage in Spain has also conflicted with the idea of private property in other scenarios. In particular, along with churches and chapels, the depopulation of rural areas has caused many other, non-religious buildings to become absentee-owned. While access to religious buildings is granted precisely for their own nature as places open to the public (and therefore the common caretaking of these properties may anyways take

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8 Europa Laica, Ley Hipotecaria: Inmatriculaciones de la Iglesia Católica. Claves para la modificación, con carácter retroactivo, de la Ley Hipotecaria y su Reglamento, que permite que la Iglesia Católica registre a su nombre bienes que son públicos o del común (Madrid: Observatorio del Laicismo y de la Laicidad, 2014).
9 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
place), access to other private properties is not granted at all, no matter how significant the resource is for the local community. A quick review of the aforementioned “Heritage in Danger List” by the non-profit organization *Hispania Nostra* serves to illustrate the magnitude of the phenomenon. The list includes over 200 palaces and castles located in rural areas, the vast majority of which are indeed absentee-owned. Regardless of the possible expropriation of these resources according to the Spanish heritage law of 1985, their preservation is greatly challenging.

### 5.2.2. Political Challenges

Political challenges relate primarily to the mistaken understanding of the ‘rural’ and ‘rural heritage’ ideas at the political level. Initially, the misunderstanding derived from the aforementioned structural challenges (lack of data and scholarly research about the topics), but through time it tended to be more related to the continuity of certain ideas and assumptions in the political discourse. Many of these ideas have remained unaltered despite the arrival of new scholarly-proven data and research. The political challenges for the incorporation of historic preservation into rural development policies are described below.

#### A. Misleading Political Understanding of the ‘Rural’

The political understanding of the ‘rural’ as ‘agricultural’ has greatly influenced the development of rural development policies at the European level, and subsequently at the national and regional levels. More significantly, scholars have also traditionally made an overwhelming emphasis on farming as the only vehicle for rural development. For instance, Oostindie has talked about the integration of care services into farms as a way to maintain these services in rural areas.\(^{12}\) Similarly, Douwe van der Ploeg and Renting have talked about “farm tourism” as a possible solution to the shrinking of agriculture and farming in rural areas, stating that “while rural development is a process of many actors, there is nonetheless a strategic role for farmers in the initiation and further elaboration of its practices. … They have the land, space, craftsmanship, buildings, animals, products, and the capacity to recombine and reconfigure the resources at their disposal.”\(^{13}\)


is indeed an assumption that does not correspond with the actual share of agriculture in rural economies, as Collantes has demonstrated.14

This over-representation of the agricultural seems to be indeed very politically rooted. For instance, in the case of Spain, Sabio has talked about how the construction of some of the country’s regional identities (such as that of Aragón) that occurred throughout the 20th century was based on an over-representation of the rural, coupled with a portrait of farmers as victims.15 The interest in regional identities flourished after the Spanish transition to democracy in the late 1970s, and authors such as Collantes have talked about how this may have hindered the interest of regional governments in favor a rigorous environmental re-orientation of rural policies, particularly in order to avoid the negative political outcomes (id est, losing the political support of the regional identity’s depositaries) of strict environmental measures.16

In fact, the power of agricultural interests to influence political decisions transcend the regional level. This may be easily illustrated by the controversy over the change of the Ministry of Agriculture that arose in Spain a few years ago. In 2008, under the progressive government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, the Ministry of Agriculture was merged with the Ministry of the Environment (“Ministerio de Medio Ambiente”), and it changed its name to Ministry of the Environment, and Rural and Marine Affairs (“Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Medio Rural y Marino”).17 Although agricultural groups argued against the change, it was not until the electoral campaign that preceded the 2011 presidential elections that the conservative Partido Popular railed against the elimination of ‘agriculture’ from the name of the ministry and promised to recover the traditional name.18 The then Minister Rosa Aguilar replied that agriculture had been “a priority for the government,” but also that the understanding of rural areas should go beyond it.19 However, after the victory of the Partido Popular in the presidential elections of December

16 Ibid.
17 SPAIN, Real Decreto 1130/2008, de 4 de julio, por el que se desarrolla la estructura orgánica básica del Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, y Medio Rural y Marino, Boletín Oficial del Estado, July 8, 2008, No. 164.
2011, the word ‘agriculture’ was brought back to the name of the ministry, named since Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and the Environment (“Ministerio de Agricultura, Alimentación, y Medio Ambiente”). Although the controversy may seem purely a typical anecdote of an electoral campaign, it does illustrates the use of agriculture and farmers as a powerful political tool.

B. Political Understanding of Heritage

Along with the political understanding of the ‘rural’ as ‘agricultural,’ the political understanding of heritage within the EU has also greatly influenced the way cultural heritage policies have been developed. In this sense, the already mentioned “European Rural Heritage Observation Guide” was an attempt to provide an official European understanding of rural heritage, in line with other documents that “foster the idea of a common European identity by emphasizing cultural heritage as a common layer of meanings shared by all the Europeans.” Some authors have been very critical of this approach. According to Lähdesmäki, the Europeanization of heritage and the interpretation of the local, regional, and national heritage in as European aims primarily to foster European identity. As such, for Lähdesmäki the Europeanization process “is taken into practice in the implementation of the EU’s cultural programs,” in a way that “the EU’s urban and regional policies are intertwined with identity politics, ….” For Lähdesmaki, the idea behind the EU’s interest in heritage would be “to take advantage of the positive associations of heritage sites in order to uplift the image of the EU as a cultural rather than bureaucratic political community.” Other authors such as Delanty and Jones have explored the issue, particularly regarding the election of architectural designs for the Euro banknotes introduced in 1999.

Nevertheless, as Lähdesmäki recognizes, the understanding of heritage a tool for European-building is indeed deeply rooted in some of the EU’s core documents, such as the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union and, more significantly, the Treaty of Lisbon.

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23 Ibid.
In its preamble, this Treaty mentions “the cultural, religious, and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality, and the rule of law.”  

In article 3, it states that “[the EU] shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe’s cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced.”  

Therefore, although the criticism is valid, it seems not as relevant to the particular case of the preservation of rural heritage as the already described mistaken understanding of the rural heritage concept.

Nevertheless, other characteristics of the EU’s understanding of heritage seem to be greatly impacting the common cultural policies. In particular, the preeminence of the idea of ‘urbanity’ as a “possible common ground for the European cultural identity,” and the subsequent explicit interest of the EU in “European cities and their historical environment” and in “architectural styles and movements in Europe,” seem to have greatly determined the lack of attention that the EU has paid to rural heritage as compared to ‘urban’ heritage (i.e. historic cities and architecture).  

In this sense, as described in Chapter 3, a better understanding and acknowledgement of the heritage resources located in rural environments could counterbalance the over-representation of urban heritage within EU policy.

5.2.3. Operational Challenges

Operational challenges refer to those issues that may have prevented, or may in the future prevent, the incorporation of historic preservation into rural development policies. These operational challenges derive mostly from the already described structural and political challenges. Lacking the adequate data and understanding of the ‘rural’ and ‘rural heritage’ ideas, many policies and programs that have been implemented have indeed failed, eventually preventing new measures and policies from being implemented due to an anticipated failure. The operational challenges for the incorporation of historic preservation into rural development policies are described below.

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27 Ibid.
A. Lack of Data about Previous Rural Heritage Programs

The specific measure for the conservation and upgrading of rural heritage that was included within the 2007-2013 European rural development programs (Measure 323) was not particularly successful. Only 62.5% of the programmed budget for this particular measure was finally spent, and over 20% of the rural development programs across the EU 27 did not include the measure. In fact, five countries (Bulgaria, Ireland, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovakia) did not introduce it in any of their rural development programs.\textsuperscript{31} The limited EU co-financing of this measure, when compared to other policies that were co-financed at a higher rate, seems to have greatly influenced its moderate implementation. More importantly, the fact that the rural heritage actions supported by the measure in Germany, France, and the UK accounted for almost 90% of the total heritage actions supported within the EU (see Graph 4.5.) suggests that the preservation of rural heritage was not understood as a rural development tool for those European countries with lower GDPs. In this sense, it was most likely due to the combination of all these factors that Measure 323 was dismantled in the new rural development program for the 2014-2020 period. However, no official reports nor data have been published analyzing the failure of the measure.

Similarly, although during the 2007-2013 period there were several local and regional programs throughout the continent that addressed the preservation of rural heritage with the support of European funds, very little data has been collected regarding their actual implementation and evolution through time. According to the EU’s Rural Development Projects Database, there were 641 rural development programs developed during that period, of which only 42 (6.5%) dealt specifically with cultural heritage.\textsuperscript{32} The information included in the database relates mostly to the time when the projects were first presented in order to receive European funding, and therefore the actual results and socioeconomic impact of these 42 programs is uncertain. In this regard, no data has been gathered regarding how successful the projects have been, nor what impacts, whether positive or negative, they had in the different communities where they were implemented.

In the case of Spain, rural development programs have been largely dependent on existing European policies. However, before the incorporation of Spain into the European Union in 1986, there were several attempts to address the preservation of rural heritage, mostly directed toward tourism development. For instance, in the context of increasing economic development that occurred at the end of Franco’s dictatorship, there was a renewed interest in the development of new *paradores* in historic buildings. Despite the dictatorial character of the regime, these projects did encounter local opposition in some cases, such as in Vozmediano (Soria). In the 1960s, locals rejected the conversion of the 9th- to 15th-century castle into a *parador* due to the request that the village be incorporated to the larger municipality of Ágreda. No feasibility nor economic impact studies were presented to the local community, and indeed eventually their strong opposition resulted in the abandonment of the project. Since the 1960s, the village has lost 86% of its population, and the castle today is included in the aforementioned “Heritage in Danger List” by *Hispania Nostra*.

In the 1980s, after the reestablishment of democracy in Spain, other top-down approaches were implemented, such as the Program for the Recuperation and Educational Use of Abandoned Villages (“Programa de Recuperación y Utilización Educativa de Pueblos Abandonados”). The project brought together the ministries of Public Works, Agriculture, and Education in order to rehabilitate three abandoned villages, Granadilla (Cáceres), Búbal (Huesca), and Umbralejo (Guadalajara). The program did succeed in restoring these three abandoned villages, which are used today for summer camps, but did so when they had already been completely depopulated. The villages are therefore uninhabited most of the year, and no studies about the economic or social impact of the restoration on the neighboring villages have been conducted in order to evaluate the success of the experience.

Interestingly, in that same period, several ministries came together to develop a program of vocational and youth training centers aimed primarily at creating job opportunities through

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33 *Paradores* is a publicly owned luxury hotel chain founded by King Alfonso XIII of Spain in the early 1930s.
35 Ibid.
the restoration of historic buildings and sites. Although the funding depended largely on the national government, these programs were locally managed and therefore adapted to local circumstances. In the case of the study area, for instance, vocational and youth training programs were developed in 1985 in Daroca (Zaragoza) and Molina de Aragón (Guadalajara), aimed to the restoration of the medieval ramparts of the two towns. Although the ramparts were pristinely restored, both escuelas taller were eventually dismantled. No information was gathered regarding the economic and social outcomes of the escuelas taller, nor even regarding the reasoning behind their dismantlement.

In this sense, the cases of Daroca and Molina contrast with that of the medieval town of Albarracín (Teruel), also located in the Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera. In 1996, the successful results of the escuela taller that was first established in the town in the late 1980s led to the establishment of a non-profit heritage foundation in charge of managing the town’s historic buildings. In order to do so, the Fundación Santa María de Albarracín incorporated representatives (and also funding) from the Aragonese government, the town council, the diocese of Teruel-Albarracín, and the private sector. During the past twenty years, this foundation has successfully worked on the medieval ramparts of the town, the cathedral, and several other historic buildings, as well as on a significant number of pieces of furniture, reredos, and altarpieces, both in Albarracín and in neighboring villages. The results of these restorations are evident, and the model has been praised and awarded both nationally and internationally. However, although the foundation is making an effort to gather data about its social, cultural, and economic impact on the town of Albarracín during the last two decades, most of the reports that have been produced tend to include merely qualitative data, and almost
In this sense, it is interesting to note that a quick check of the census data for the 1981 to 2011 period reveals how while Daroca and Molina (where the escuelas taller were dismantled) have lost 11.5% and 9.3% of their population, Albarracín has indeed lost only 2.2% (from 1,127 to 1,102 inhabitants). Certainly the demographic evolution of the three towns may have been influenced by other factors. However, it may also been the case that the heritage-related jobs created by the foundation, along with the increase in tourism derived from the restoration of the town, might have contributed to slow down depopulation.

This lack of data regarding European, Spanish, regional, and local heritage-led rural development projects contrasts greatly with other efforts that are being made worldwide to increase the information gathered about the socioeconomic benefits of historic preservation. In this sense, the work carried out around the United States’ historic Route 66 by Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, the U.S. National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, and World Monuments Fund is especially remarkable. These institutions partnered together to produce a three-volume economic impact study of the route, analyzing its effects in local communities along over 2,400 miles. The study was able to demonstrate, with both quantitative and qualitative data, the positive community and economic impacts of preserving heritage along the route, and also identified a series of opportunities to enhance the revitalization of local communities through the promotion of sustainable heritage tourism.

Furthermore, following on the conclusions of the report, World Monuments Fund organized a roundtable of over one hundred representatives from the private and public sectors (including local communities and non-profits) in order “to explore ways to leverage new opportunities for investment and innovative partnerships in heritage tourism and historic preservation along the route.” Significantly, one of the main challenges that the Route 66 project encountered was the lack of government-gathered data. Although the parties involved in the project were able to do a significant data collection that eventually allowed them to make a

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strong argument to support the preservation of the historic route, the whole process would have been considerably easier if data had been previously collected at the government level. Similarly, in the European and Spanish contexts, the lack of data collection at the government level is hindering any scholarly research regarding the impacts of historic preservation. As a result, that lack of research is itself preventing a greater interest from policy-makers in the incorporation of historic preservation into rural development policies.

B. Lack of Expertise and Awareness at the Local Level

In the case of Spain, top-down approaches to heritage (from the protection of all Spanish castles to the restoration of abandoned villages) have proven unsuccessful. However, at the same time it seems that relying completely on the local initiative may not be feasible nor adequate as the general approach to rural heritage preservation. The *Ecce Homo* case and the images in Figure 3.3 illustrate the effects that the lack of awareness and expertise among locals may have on the preservation of rural heritage. More generally, small village councils lack the human and material resources to develop and enforce mechanisms to control the restoration, rehabilitation, and adaptive-reuse of historic properties. Typically, the staff of small village councils include one single full-time worker in charge of the daily maintenance of public services (streetlights, sewage system, gardens and public spaces, etc.) and a part-time legal clerk who usually works in several, neighboring villages. Within this context, the duty of monitoring the observance of regional and national heritage policies relies primarily on the elected mayor and councilmembers. In many cases, they lack the expertise to develop this task. In others, flagrant violations of heritage laws are overlooked in order to avoid creating conflict in the small, local community.

In the case of Aragón, for instance, the non-profit Public Association for the Defense of Aragonese Heritage (“Asociación Pública para la Defensa del Patrimonio Aragonés, APUDEPA”) has documented several examples of the inability of small village councils to ensure the preservation of local heritage. In April 2011, APUDEPA denounced the demolition of a medieval entryway in the village of Calcena (Zaragoza). Calcena has lost 93% of its population since 1950 (from 961 to 64 inhabitants in 2011) and its village council is formed by just the mayor and two other elected officials. In this case, it was the mayor who decided to

demolish the arch in order to facilitate the entrance of trucks to an adjacent plaza.\textsuperscript{49} There was strong local opposition to the razing, and indeed the mayor was not reelected in the local elections that took place a month later. More recently, in 2014, APUDEPA denounced the demolition of a traditional 17\textsuperscript{th}-century Aragonese house in the village of Fabara (Zaragoza). Fabara has lost 38\% of its population since 1950 (from 1,997 to 1,242 inhabitants) and its town council is formed by the mayor and eight councilmen and councilwomen. The house, which was abandoned, had been designated a landmark by the town council in the 1980s, but after a falling cornice of a 1940s building located nearby killed a woman, the mayor approved its demolition, fearing another accident. The de-designation of the house and its demolition was actually illegal, but by the time the Heritage Department of the Aragonese Government found out, most of the house had already been demolished.\textsuperscript{50} In the local elections that took place one year later, the mayor was reelected, with a higher percentage of the public vote than in past years.

Although the cases of the \textit{Ecce Homo}, Calcena, and Fabara might seem anecdotal, they provide an accurate illustration of the different local actors that play a role in the preservation of heritage resources located in rural environments. As is later described in this chapter, the particularities of rural communities might indeed be beneficial and advantageous for historic preservation due to the strength of both local identity and community ties. However, as the examples indicate, they might also be challenging in many different ways.

\section*{C. Lack and Unviability of Basic Public Services in Small Municipalities}

In \textit{Sustainability and the Civil Commons}, Jennifer Sumner provides a very accurate description of the challenges that rural communities are facing worldwide. According to Sumner, “sparsely populated and spatially isolated, rural communities lack the range and depth of resources available to their urban counterparts [to deal with the impacts of globalization]” and, in addition, “they are often excluded from consideration by the urban bias written into government programs and policies.” \textsuperscript{51} Regarding the role of farming in rural communities, Sumner states that “while farming has always been a difficult occupation, it has become almost

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{50} “Burofax de Apudepa al ayuntamiento de Fabara a fin de parar el derribo de la casa del Aire n° 34,” \textit{APUDEPA (blog)}, November 16, 2014, \url{http://apudepa.blogia.com/2014/111605-burofax-de-apudepa-al-ayuntamiento-de-fabara-a-fin-de-parar-el-derribo-de-la-cas.php}
\textsuperscript{51} Sumner, Jennifer, \textit{Sustainability and the Civil Commons: Rural Communities in the Age of Globalization} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 31.
impossible in the age of globalization for small and medium-sized farms to survive. … The corporate takeover of agriculture is one of the last battles in a long war over who will own the economy – local families or distant investors.” 52 In the case of the EU, the Common Agricultural Policy has reduced the crudeness of that ‘battle,’ but Sumner’s analysis about the threats to the viability of rural communities are nonetheless applicable to rural Europe.

In particular, Sumner states that “outmigration is caused by the erosion of employment opportunities associated with rural restructuring, which produces negative multipliers resulting in the contradiction of local economies, the withdrawal of services and further demographic decline.” 53 Sumner gives the example of the closing of rural schools, “driven by ideological considerations based on questionable claims of the cost-effectiveness of economies of scale” and how, as a result of their dismantlement, “rural areas have become progressively less self-sufficient and self-contained.” 54 Sumner’s analysis coincides with that of experts and scholars in rural development, such as Juan Manuel Polentinos, manager of Spanish non-profit Rural Development Centers Confederation (“Confederación de Centros de Desarrollo Rural, COCEDER”), who has argued that “the closing of the school is the end of the village.” 55

As in the case of agriculture, in Europe, and particularly in Spain, rural schools are actually highly subsidized, and in many regions public rural schools are open as long as there is a minimum of 4 children. In the particular case of Aragón, for instance, in the 2015-2016 academic year, four schools were kept open with only three students, while eight others stayed open with four to five children.56 However, these schools, located in very small municipalities, are likely to close in the near future if depopulation continues, such as occurred to nineteen rural schools in Aragón that were closed from 2012 to 2015 due to the lack of students.57

In this sense, even when considering the existing public support for schools and other basic services in rural areas, the viability of these services in the medium-term is questionable if

57 Ibid.
new population do not arrive. More importantly, in the case of the smallest municipalities, whose public services (schools, doctor’s offices, etc.) were dismantled in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s as depopulation progressed, the arrival of new populations and even the retention of current inhabitants is particularly difficult. As a result, even if efforts are made at the public level to subsidize rural development programs, if towns cannot maintain sufficient population to allow for the maintenance of very basic public services (such as schools), it is unlikely that new settlers will move to rural areas. Furthermore, it is likely that locals will keep out-migrating.

5.3. Opportunities

While the challenges to incorporate historic preservation into rural development policies are numerous, the existing opportunities to do so are also abundant. In this sense, there are favorable circumstances to foster political interest in the issue and to influence policy-making, both at the European and Spanish levels. In addition, at the local and regional levels there are a series of factors that may decisively contribute to a successful implementation of heritage-led rural development policies. These different types of opportunities are described below.

5.3.1. Opportunities to Foster Political Interest

The opportunities for fostering political interest in the relationship between rural heritage and rural development refer primarily to the increasing media and scholarly interest around rural issues. In this sense, in the case of Spain, recent political decisions about rural areas seem to directly relate to current scholarly debates about the necessity of approaching rural development from a broader perspective. These scholarly debates have been featured in media outlets, creating public opinion and ultimately influencing political action. Considering that scholarly knowledge about rural issues is influencing policy-making, it seems likely that an increase in the scholarly knowledge and understanding about how depopulation affects rural heritage would eventually influence decision- and policy-makers to address the phenomenon.

A. Increasing Media and Scholarly Interest in Rural Issues

Although rural issues are still greatly marginalized within mass media, in the past few years there has been a marked increase in the media interest in the depopulation of rural Spain.
In particular, the main Spanish newspapers (El País and El Mundo) have extensively covered the research carried out by Professor Francisco Burillo regarding the rural depopulation of the Serranía Celtibérica (i.e. the Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera).\textsuperscript{58} In the case of El País, several articles dealing with the depopulation of inland, rural Spain have even been published in the international, English edition of the newspaper, which only features a very small portion of all the articles published daily by the newspaper.\textsuperscript{60} \textsuperscript{61} As a result, international media outlets that usually collaborate with El País have also covered the issue, emphasizing many of the ideas presented by Professor Burillo, such as the fact that the area “rivals the Arctic provinces of Lapland as the least populated zone in Europe,” and that it is “the most disjointed region in all of Spain, and the entire European Union.” \textsuperscript{62}

At the same time, in the scholarly realm, there has been an increasing interest in the rural within the framework of the debate about a broader understanding of sustainability. In particular, Yanarella and Levine have introduced the idea of “rural partnerland” as “a putative companion to the development of sustainable cities and sustainable urban implantations.” \textsuperscript{63} In this sense, they have defined the “city-region” as a “complex network of relationships,” proposing the idea of a “sustainable area budget, SAB,” understood as a “land-based budget from which to satisfy [the city-region’s] needs now and into the future.” \textsuperscript{64} It is within this understanding of the rural, as part of the broader urban context, where an increasing interest in the development of rural policy seems to be expected. In particular, Yanarella and Levine ask for a “policy effort … to influence the interaction between the urban and surrounding rural areas in order to slow down or halt urban sprawl or to involve the city and region in an exchange of goods, materials, energy, and social and cultural opportunities and benefits.” \textsuperscript{65} As a result of these policies, “the city should … achieve a sustainability balance-seeking regime within the entire city-region.” \textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{58} Gómez, Luis Op. cit.
\textsuperscript{63} Yanarella, Ernest J., and Richard S. Levine, The City as Fulcrum of Global Sustainability (New York: Anthem Press, 2011), 64.
Other authors such as Sumner have also emphasized the interrelationship between the urban and the rural, and how “history makes clear that the metropolis and the hinterland benefited from each other,” even if their relationships have not always been equitable.67 Similarly, authors such as Collantes have asked for a different, “more integrated approach” to rural problems and rural development.68 In this context, the aforementioned Special Commission to Study the Development of Policy to Prevent the Depopulation of Mountain Areas of the Spanish Senate (“Comisión Especial de Estudio sobre las medidas a desarrollar para evitar la desaparición de las zonas de montaña”) addressed many of the concerns and debates within the scholarly realm, particularly the need to tackle rural issues from an interdisciplinary perspective.69

Although the Spanish Senate did argue for the valorization of the preservation of rural heritage (as has already been discussed in Chapter 3), it seems that it is precisely the aforementioned lack of scholarly research about the effects of depopulation in rural heritage that has hindered a more ambitious incorporation of historic preservation into rural development policies. However, if more scholarly research is done regarding these issues, it seems likely that the interest of decision- and policy-makers will concurrently increase. In this regard, the current understanding of heritage within the European Union, and how it might influence policy-making, is described below.

5.3.2. Opportunities to Influence Policy-Making

Traditionally, the cultural heritage policy within the EU has focused specifically on three efforts, the European Heritage Days, the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage (also known as the Europa Nostra Awards), and the European Heritage Label.70 These programs are aimed to “assist and complement the actions of the member states in preserving and promoting Europe’s cultural heritage,” according to both the article 3 of the Treaty of Lisbon and also article 167 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union. It is in agreement with these documents that the member states have the legal mandate to intervene in cultural heritage, while

69 SPAIN, Informe de la Comisión Especial de Estudio sobre las Medidas a Desarrollar para Evitar la Desaparición de las Zonas de Montaña, Boletín Oficial de las Cortes Generales: Senado, June 26, 2015, No. 550, 375.
the EU is expected to supplement national and regional cultural heritage policies. Nevertheless, cultural heritage is already eligible for significant EU funding within several programs, including “Creative Europe,” “Erasmus+,” the European Structural and Investment Funds, “Europe for Citizens,” and “Horizon 2020.” 71 Significantly, over the last few years, there has been an explicit interest in heritage within the different agencies and institutions of the European Union. It is within this context that the incorporation of historic preservation into rural development policies at the European level seems particularly feasible.

A. Increasing European Union’s Interest in Cultural Heritage

The increasing interest in cultural heritage that European institutions have shown in recent years materialized in May 2014, when the EU’s culture ministers officially called for the “mainstreaming of cultural heritage in national and European policies,” and “the development of a strategic approach to cultural heritage.” 72 Following that recommendation, in July 2014 the European Commission adopted the communication “Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe,” explicitly recognizing that the contribution of cultural heritage to economic growth and social cohesion had been undervalued.73 Androulla Vassiliou, the then European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, stated that Europe needed “to maximize the intrinsic, economic, and societal value of cultural heritage,” and she encouraged the consideration of heritage in broader policy-making at the EU, national and regional levels.74 In order to avoid a negative response by member states to the involvement of the EU in cultural heritage (which is a national concern), the communication “Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe” explicitly stated that “there is no contradiction between national responsibilities and EU action: heritage is always both local and European. It has been forged over time, but also across borders and communities. Heritage is made up of local stories that together make the history of Europe.” 75

71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
According to this significant document, European cultural heritage is “an irreplaceable repository of knowledge and a valuable resource for economic growth, employment and social cohesion.” 76 In economic terms, the communication explicitly stated that the renovation and maintenance of existing buildings represents around 28% of the value of Europe’s construction industry.77 Similarly, in the case of tourism (which is worth €415 billion per year and accounts for 15 million jobs in the EU), the communication emphasized that the Eurobarometer of May 2011 pointed out how heritage was the key factor in choosing their tourist destination for 27% of EU travelers.78 Finally, in the case of social cohesion, the communication stated that heritage “has a great capacity to promote social integration, through regeneration of neglected areas, creation of locally-rooted jobs, and promotion of shared understanding and a sense of community, … [offering] important educational and volunteering opportunities for both young and older people and [promoting] dialogue between different cultures and generations.” 79

In the particular case of cultural heritage in rural environments, the document explicitly recognized that much of Europe’s cultural heritage is “embedded in rural areas and remote regions.” In this context, the communication proposed “innovative forms of community-oriented management [that] can greatly improve the economic and social potential [of these areas].” 80 Similarly, the document also explicitly stated that “under the European Regional Development Fund … investments in small-scale cultural infrastructure as part of a territorial strategy [could] contribute both to the development of endogenous potential and to the promotion of social inclusion and quality of life, … in both urban and rural contexts.” 81 These statements are clearly in line with the understanding of heritage as a possible tool for rural development, defended in this thesis. Although this understanding has not yet pervaded rural policy, it has started to pervade cultural heritage policy within the EU.

In this regard, the Committee on Culture and Education of the European Parliament passed its own version of “Towards an Integrated Approach to Cultural Heritage for Europe”

in June 2015.\textsuperscript{82} The Committee explicitly called on the member states “to strategically plan cultural heritage-related projects that can lead to overall regional and local development, international and interregional cooperation programs, the creation of jobs, sustainable rural and urban regeneration, and the preservation and promotion of traditional skills related to cultural heritage restoration.”\textsuperscript{83} That same document was also evaluated by the Committee of Transport and Tourism of the EP, which underlined the potential “for boosting cultural tourism in rural, island, coastal and mountainous areas … [in order] to diversify traditional economic activities and encourage local populations to remain, thereby averting depopulation and the abandonment and deterioration of many valuable cultural sites.”\textsuperscript{84}

Similarly, in the context of “Horizon 2020” (the EU’s Framework Program for Research and Innovation), the European Commission explicitly stated that “cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible) can be used as a driver for the sustainable growth of urban and rural areas, as a factor of production and competitiveness and a means for introducing socially and environmentally innovative solutions. The overall challenge is to go far beyond simple conservation, restoration, physical rehabilitation, or repurposing of a site and to demonstrate heritage potential as a powerful economic, social, and environmental catalyst for regeneration, sustainable development, economic growth, and improvement of people’s well-being and living environments.”\textsuperscript{85} In the particular case of rural heritage, the European Commission argued for the development of “large-scale demonstration projects” of heritage-led rural regeneration “in order to pave the way for their rapid replication and up-scaling,” according to a “role models” and “replicators” approach.\textsuperscript{86} These projects were explicitly recommended to be carried out with a multidisciplinary approach, including “disciplines such as architecture, archaeological sciences, cultural anthropology, law, economics, governance, planning, cultural, and historical studies,” in order “to properly address the complex challenges of this issue.”\textsuperscript{87}


\textsuperscript{84} European Parliament, \textit{Towards an Integrated, Op. cit.}, 20


\textsuperscript{87} Ibid
Additionally, the demonstrated increasing interest in heritage of the European institutions has recently led the European Commission to designate 2018 as the “European Year of Cultural Heritage” with the specific objective to “disseminate and increase awareness and education among future generations in respect of the values of the European cultural heritage and its protection.” In this sense, it is interesting to note that 2018 will coincide with the beginning of the discussions about the future design and objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy for the 2021-2027 period. If the appropriate momentum is created (if political interest is fostered, according to what has already been discussed), it seems feasible that cultural heritage may be mainstreamed into rural development policies at the European level.

B. European Union’s Understanding of Heritage as a ‘Public Good’

Along with the increasing interest in heritage within European institutions, the EU’s understanding of heritage as a public good may indeed facilitate the incorporation of historic preservation into publicly-funded rural development policies and programs. In the case of natural heritage, it has already been described in Chapter 4 how the most recent reform of the Common Agricultural Policy recognized that “farmers manage the countryside for the benefit of us all. They supply public goods, the most important of which is the good care and maintenance of our soils, our landscapes and our biodiversity. The market does not pay for these public goods. To remunerate farmers for this service to society as a whole, the EU provides farmers with income support.” Interestingly, in the case of cultural heritage the aforementioned document “Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe” explicitly states that “cultural heritage is a shared resource, and a common good. Like other such goods it can be vulnerable to over-exploitation and under-funding, which can result in neglect, decay and, in some cases, oblivion.” This explicit recognition of natural and cultural heritage as public goods is essential to understand how it is feasible that both may be effectively incorporated into publicly-funded policies, such as rural development programs.

The European Parliament has called on member states “to emphasize the value of their heritage assets by promoting studies to determine the cultural and economic value of the cultural

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heritage so as to transform the ‘cost’ of its preservation into an ‘investment’ in its value” (an approach that relates to the lack of quantitative and qualitative data about successful heritage-led rural development cases).

However, even when the necessity for more and better data has been recognized, the European Commission has already stated that the understanding of cultural heritage as a financial burden is mistaken and misleading. In this sense, a report of the expert group on cultural heritage of the European Commission published in 2015 explicitly stated that: “In terms of economic policy, cultural heritage has generally been considered as a cost to society; a financial burden tolerated, principally, as a moral duty. … This assessment of heritage echoes the now outdated view of environmental protection as only an economic cost factor. … Cultural heritage must be seen as a special, but integral, component in the production of European GDP and innovation, its growth process, competitiveness and in the welfare of European society. Like environmental protection, it should be mainstreamed into policy and regarded as a production factor in economic and wider policy development.” Therefore, the incorporation of cultural heritage along with natural heritage into rural development policies seems politically feasible.

5.3.3. Opportunities to Ensure the Success of Implemented Policies

Even if the appropriate momentum is created and the new CAP for 2021-2027 does incorporate historic preservation into publicly-funded rural development policies, the success of these policies may indeed be either hindered or facilitated depending on how the new policies address the key character-defining features of rural environments. In particular, the understanding and acknowledgement of the local, rural communities is essential to ensure the success of any policy to be implemented in rural environments. In this sense, as described below, the traditional community stewardship of heritage due to a strong sense of local identity, the political empowerment of small municipalities, and the potential involvement of floating and diaspora populations may indeed highly contribute to the success of rural development policies. These opportunities to ensure the success of future policies are described below.

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A. Traditional Community Stewardship of Cultural Heritage

The role of local communities in the preservation of cultural heritage, already described in Chapter 3, has somewhat been somehow recognized by European institutions and decision makers alike in the past few years. For instance, the European Commission stated in 2014 that “the European Union is committed to helping all those involved in Europe’s cultural and creative sectors – from local communities celebrating their cultural heritage to producers of an award-winning film.” 93 Similarly, during the European Conference on Cultural Heritage celebrated in Turin in 2014, Commissioner Vassiliou stated that the EU “must help local communities to take ownership of heritage management, to make it part of their daily life and common space and a factor of sustainable development … by developing innovative forms of community-oriented management that can enhance the economic and social potential of cultural heritage and contribute to the well-being of citizens.” 94 More specifically, in the “Towards an Integrated Approach to Cultural Heritage for Europe,” the European Parliament “urged” European institutions “to create links between the heritage and local communities with a view to capitalizing on the involvement of local stakeholders in rural and remote regions.” In particular, the European Parliament recommended a strong emphasis “on the training of human resources and financial support for heritage conservation.” 95

While this explicit recognition of the necessity to incorporate and train local communities in the preservation of their heritage is valuable, there nonetheless seems to be a certain lack of acknowledgement of the traditional role of local communities as the primary caretakers of cultural heritage. Generally, these small communities do lack the monetary resources and expertise to correctly preserve their heritage. However, as the case of the Ecce Homo illustrates, that has not prevented them from attempting to do it. In this sense, exactly as the CAP for 2014-2020 has explicitly recognized the role of farmers as the traditional stewards of the landscape, the incorporation of the preservation of cultural heritage into rural development policies should indeed recognize the traditional role of local communities (as a whole) in the preservation of cultural heritage. In this sense, the political understanding and

acknowledgement of the customs, traditions, and practices of community-led historic preservation in rural areas could greatly contribute to the success of any policy to be implemented at the European, national, and regional levels.

B. Strong Political Empowerment of Small Municipalities

Although the size of small municipalities does imply great functional challenges (such as the unviability of public services), at the same time it does allow for great community cohesion and participation. In this sense, it is specifically interesting to note the highly democratic organization of small municipalities. In the case of Spain, according to the Law 5/1985 of the General Electoral Regime (“Ley del Régimen Electoral General”), municipalities under 100 people may choose to be governed under the so-called Open Council system (“Sistema de Consejo Abierto”), in which decisions are made by periodic village-wide assemblies.96 The adoption of this system is optional, and these very small municipalities can also opt to be governed under a traditional council system, electing three councilmen or councilwomen (the councilmember with the most votes is usually designated the mayor). In municipalities with 101-250 people, five representatives must be elected, while the number rises to seven representatives in the case of villages between 250 and 1,000 people.

According to the Law 27/2013 for the Rationalization and Sustainability of Local Governments (“Ley de Racionalización y Sostenibilidad de la Administración Local”), elected officials within local councils in municipalities under 1,000 people are expected to perform their duties in a voluntary manner, and only under exceptional circumstances may they be remunerated. This way, in order to approve a salary for elected councilmembers, village councils must have both a balanced budget and no outstanding debt, and even if a salary is eventually approved, no elected official (not even the mayor) is allowed to have a full-time contract.97 In this sense, the overwhelming majority of people serving as local politicians in small Spanish municipalities do not receive any compensation for their work, and they did so not only according to this law, but to previous legislation and customs.98 Some authors have asked for the elimination of these small, voluntary village councils, which are perceived as unsustainable in the

98 Ibid.
long term. However, it is precisely their voluntary character what indicates the strong community involvement of the small, local communities they govern.

Furthermore, along with strong empowerment at the local level, during the last two decades several *comarcal* and provincial non-profit platforms have been created in order to advocate for new European, national, and regional policies that could more effectively tackle rural issues, and particularly depopulation and infrastructure. In the case of the Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera, for instance, different citizen groups and public administrations (primarily town and village councils) have formed the platforms “¡Teruel Existe!” “Soria ¡YA!” and “La Otra Guadalajara” in an attempt to lobby for specific investment plans that address the particular challenges of the rural areas of the provinces of Soria, Teruel, and Guadalajara. These platforms have received the unanimous support of local and provincial politicians, demonstrating a common understanding of the main threats to their communities (aging, depopulation, lack of infrastructures, etc.) regardless of their particular political affiliations. In this sense, if correctly acknowledged and understood, the political empowerment of small rural communities and local politicians could definitely contribute to the success of any heritage-led rural development policies and programs that may be implemented.

C. Potential Role of Floating Population and Cultural Associations

Along with the crucial role of rural communities in the daily life of small municipalities (and therefore in the stewardship of both cultural and natural heritage), in the last few years some authors have started to recognize the role that floating, diaspora, and recurrent tourist populations may have in the socioeconomic performance of rural areas. In this sense, since the 1980s the foundation of rural, locally-based cultural associations have emphasized the role played by non-permanent residents in small municipalities. In the case of the study area, for instance, all 153 municipalities have at least one cultural association formed both by locals and people with family roots in these municipalities who visit regularly. These associations (such as

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the “Asociación Cultural Virgen de la Olmeda” in Used, Zaragoza; the “Asociación Cultural El Olmo” in Tortuera, Guadalajara; and the “Asociación Cultural La Trinidad” in Tornos, Teruel) are governed by an elected board and periodic public assemblies, and they organize a variety of cultural activities throughout the year, from hiking and “fun runs” to oral history workshops and painting contests, among many others. These activities not only contribute to the cultural and social cohesion of small municipalities but, by encouraging visitation by non-residents and tourists, they also contribute to the maintenance of the commercial sector in these villages.

Within the study area, the cultural association “El Castillo” of Langa del Castillo (Zaragoza) is a great example to illustrate the role of these platforms. The village of Langa del Castillo has lost 82.5% of its population since 1950, decreasing from 782 to 137 inhabitants. However, the village’s cultural association has over 750 associates (who pay an annual fee), primarily descendants of people who left the village in the last few decades. Since its foundation in 1994, this cultural association has collaborated to recover local traditions and crafts, organize exhibitions, and also helped the village council in organizing activities for both locals and visitors alike. Many of these activities (such as the recovery of the traditional fires for San Antón) have allowed non-residents to learn about the tangible and intangible heritage of the village. At the same time, they have made locals aware of the value of their own heritage. The case of “El Castillo” is not unique, and most cultural associations within the study area (and also in other Spanish rural areas) work in a very similar way. In this regard, it seems that non-permanent residents and cultural associations could definitely contribute to a successful incorporation of historic preservation into rural development policies.

5.4. Summary of Findings

The analysis of the findings of this thesis presented throughout this chapter allows for better comprehension of the reasons behind the scarce use of historic preservation as a tool for rural development at the European, Spanish, and regional levels. The lack of knowledge and understanding of the idea of the ‘rural’ in general, and of the complexities of rural depopulation

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102 Instituto Nacional de Estadística, “Alteraciones de los municipios en los Censos de Población desde 1842: Langa del Castillo” http://www.ine.es/intercensal/
and rural heritage in particular, have prevented a greater interest in the issue from policy- and decision-makers. In addition, the lack of recognition of local communities and the oversimplification of rural issues have also contributed to the failure of some attempts to actually use heritage resources as vehicles for economic growth. As a result, the rural development policies that have actually been implemented over the last decades have primarily perpetuated an agriculture-centered approach to rural development that has proven unsuccessful in creating economic development and reverting depopulation. These policies have not taken advantage of the possibilities of incorporating historic preservation in their toolbox. However, the findings of this thesis demonstrate that there are clear opportunities to successfully do so.

At the European level, there is an increasing interest in heritage, and the European Union has already suggested that historic preservation, “like environmental protection … should be mainstreamed into policy and regarded as a production factor in economic and wider policy development.” 104 This understanding is therefore likely to pervade other policies, and particularly the Common Agricultural Policy that determines the rural development strategies and priorities at the European, national, and regional levels. Furthermore, in addition to the momentum at the European level, at the local level there are opportunities to ensure the success of new, heritage-led rural development policies, such as the traditional community stewardship of cultural heritage exemplified by the *Ecce Homo* case.

In order to supplement the findings presented throughout this chapter, as well as to provide a final conclusion to this thesis, a series of research- and policy-related recommendations are presented in the following chapter.

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Embid has lost 80.1% of its population since 1950.
6.1. Recommendations

According to the analysis presented in previous chapters, the incorporation of historic preservation into rural development policies and programs seems not only politically feasible but also reasonably appropriate to tackle the issues of depopulation and the dilapidation of rural heritage. In this regard, this thesis demonstrates that both phenomena are indeed related, and particularly that there are numerous challenges and opportunities for the actual definition and implementation of heritage-led rural development policies that could ensure the preservation of rural heritage while creating economic growth and opportunities in rural areas. According to the analysis of the findings of this thesis presented in Chapter 5, a series of research- and policy-related recommendations are presented below.

6.1.1. Research-Related Recommendations

As has been emphasized throughout this work, there is a significant lack of qualitative and quantitative data regarding many of the issues that this thesis deals with. In this sense, it is particularly interesting to note how in the crucial document passed in May 2015 “Towards and Integrated Approach to Cultural Heritage for Europe,” the European Parliament explicitly stated that “it is high time that we placed culture higher on the political agenda and assessed its true value in terms of economic growth and jobs. On top of political we need to have properly conducted statistics that can cover the wide spectrum of skills and jobs related to culture in general and cultural heritage in particular.”

The lack of data collection at the government level has significantly hindered the production of research about depopulation, rural heritage, and the apparent failure of exclusively agriculture-based rural development programs. However, if more, and better, data is collected, the production of more research and better analysis could definitely foster political interest, influence decision-making, and contribute to the success of new heritage-led rural development policies. Although many questions could be posed for the research agenda, the three major issues that should be addressed in the near future are described below.

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A. Need for More Quantitative Data about the Implementation of the CAP

The European Union considers the Common Agricultural Policy a huge success and the primary reason behind Europe’s food security. The CAP as a whole (including both direct payments to farmers and rural development programs) currently requires around 40% of the entire EU’s budget (it was almost 75% in the early 1980s). However, very limited quantitative data has been gathered by the European institutions about the actual socioeconomic effects that such a large, continued investment has had on the development of rural areas, and particularly in avoiding out-migration and rural depopulation. As a result, limited scholarly research has been carried out regarding these issues.

However, with the scarce, publicly available data, there are opportunities to do some interesting comparisons, for instance, combining the data on payments to farmers (which is publicly available and can be sorted by beneficiary, municipality, and comarca) and population data (available at the Spanish National Statistics Institute). The analysis of the data for the 294-inhabitant village of Used (Zaragoza), one of the municipalities within the study area, shows that in 2014, 260 beneficiaries received over €1.68 million in CAP’s direct payments, ranging from less than €730 to over €63,000 per beneficiary. Considering that the payments varied only slightly during the 2007-2013 CAP, during that six-year period the EU spent over €10 million in payments to farmers in the village. In that same period, Used lost over 18% of its population (from 360 people in 2007 to 294 in 2014).

Although this particular case may be anecdotal, it demonstrates that indeed huge public expenditures do not necessarily prevent depopulation from occurring. It is precisely within this context that a comprehensive study of the actual socioeconomic impact of the CAP is needed in order to better understand its weaknesses and strengths. This study should be locally oriented, contrasting, by village or comarcas throughout the continent, the EU’s public expenditure with the actual evolution of the population, the performance of non-agricultural sectors, the average income, and also the preservation of natural and cultural heritage.

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B. Need for More Quantitative and Qualitative Data about Rural Heritage

The Spanish national government does not keep an official account of historic properties in rural Spain, and only the “Heritage in Danger List” by the non-profit Hispania Nostra provides an estimate of the quantity and significance of these resources. Certainly, as the decree that protected all Spanish castles without even attempting to inventory them illustrates, cataloguing all the heritage assets located in rural environments seems unfeasible. In addition, the transfer of the cultural heritage responsibilities from the national to the regional governments (“comunidades autónomas”) has resulted in the discarding of the “national monument” idea and the establishment of regional catalogues of bienes de interés cultural (“heritage of cultural interest”), both tangible and intangible, that follow strict regional boundaries.

However, even considering the unfeasibility of cataloguing all the rural heritage resources, the national government should at least attempt to combine the already existing data of the different Spanish regions to produce a comprehensive national inventory of all heritage resources of cultural interest (tangible and intangible) located in the country’s rural areas. If integrated into a geographic information systems (GIS), the catalogue could be easily combined not only with information about natural heritage already in use by the European Union, but also with population and other socioeconomic data, facilitating scholarly research and also allowing decision-makers to identify opportunities for potential heritage-based rural development programs and projects. Furthermore, the introduction of the catalogue into GIS would also allow for the spatial analysis of the information according to demographic, climatic, and other non-official regions such as the Highlands of the Iberian Cordillera or the three comarcas studied in this thesis. Moreover, the inclusion of brief information about the different heritage resources included in the catalogue (such as current condition or potential for adaptive re-use in the case of built heritage, for instance) could also allow researcher to gain a better understanding of the relationship between depopulation and the dilapidation of rural heritage.

C. Need for More Quantitative Data about Heritage-Led Rural Projects

As has been detailed in Chapter 5, one of the main challenges for promoting the development of heritage-led rural development policies and programs is the lack of quantitative data about previous similar experiences. In this regard, it is interesting to note that as early as 1983 the Council of Europe asked for the creation of a repository of “audio-visual and
documentary material, and photographic exhibitions of restoration projects [of built, cultural heritage resources located in rural areas] and environmental schemes that have already been completed in a number of countries,” in order to reveal “the various techniques and situations as well as the difficulties encountered when seeking to husband the rural heritage and protect the environment and living standards of the inhabitants.”  

In this sense, at the European level it would be interesting to collect more quantitative data about the projects that were developed during the 2007-2013 period in order to determine why just 62.5% of the programmed expenditure for Measure 323, “Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage,” was actually spent. This analysis could also help to understand why that specific measure was discarded for the 2014-2020 period. Similarly, in the case of those projects featured in the EU’s Rural Development Projects Database, it would be necessary to gather more quantitative and qualitative data, specifically about those 42 cultural heritage-related projects that were developed throughout the continent at the local and regional level with the support of European funds. The information currently included in the database corresponds mostly to the moment when the projects were first presented to the EU in order to receive funding. The entries have not been updated since, and therefore the real social, cultural, and economic impacts of these projects are unknown.

Some projects developed internationally, such as the massive economic impact study of the historic U.S.’s Route 66, could serve as a model for the documentation that could be produced at the scholarly realm regarding heritage-led rural development programs. However, in the case of Spain there is also a need for better data-collection at the national, regional, and local levels. In this sense, along with data about Spanish projects that received EU funding, it would be necessary, for instance, that national, regional, and local governments made available the data regarding the implementation of the escuelas taller in the 1980s. This would allow for a comparison between successful cases (such as the case in Albarracín, Teruel) and unsuccessful ones (such as the escuela taller of Daroca, Zaragoza, closed in the 1990s). The comparison would allow for a better understanding of how, and why, these heritage-based rural development models have been successful in some locations while not in others.

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6.1.2. Policy-Related Recommendations

Regardless of the need for better research and data that could foster and support political interest in rural heritage and rural depopulation, policy-making, and policy-implementation, there are already a series of scholarly and politically established facts that could allow for the creation of new, rural development policies and the improvement of existing ones. In the last few years the European Union has recognized that “like environmental protection, [cultural heritage] should be mainstreamed into policy and regarded as a production factor in economic and wider policy development.” ⁶ At the same time, the EU has also stated that both cultural and natural heritage are ‘public goods,’ from which “the whole society – present and future – benefits.” ⁷ More specifically, the EU has even recognized the role of “farmers” as stewards of the landscape and the necessity to “remunerate farmers for this service to society as a whole” through the provision of “income support.” ⁸

However, scholars have demonstrated that indeed rural communities are neither exclusively nor even primarily formed by farmers, and that the share of agriculture in the rural economy has greatly decreased over the last five decades.⁹ In the case of Spain, as has been mentioned, according to Collantes the agriculture’s share in the employment of mountainous rural areas decreased from around 80% in 1960 to around 40% in 1981, and finally to just 16% in 2001.¹⁰ In this regard, even when new data could provide even greater support for a shift in the overwhelming agricultural nature of rural development policies, already existing research proves the necessity for these programs to address specifically other economic sectors different from agriculture. The data discussed throughout this thesis also supports the case for the involvement of the whole community in rural development projects and not just exclusively farmers. In particular, the data proves the urgency of fostering the employment of youth and women in a context of increasing aging and demographic masculinization of small rural municipalities. These three recommendations at the policy level are detailed below.

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⁸ Ibid.
A. Shift in the Agricultural Orientation of Rural Development

The overwhelming emphasis on farming of the current European rural development programs responds to an over-representation of agriculture in the idea of the ‘rural’ that does not correspond with actual data about the rural economy. This misunderstanding of the rural has pervaded national and regional policies and it has translated into an almost exclusive reliance on agriculture of all rural heritage programs developed in Europe. In this regard, while €84 billion has been allocated for rural development programs in the European Union for the 2014-2020 period (compared to €278 billion allocated for direct payments to farmers), the huge majority of that budget is also related to agriculture, farming, and farmers.11 For instance, it is important to note that the funds for complementary payments to farmers (such as those related to the fulfillment of animal welfare, and food safety standards) are actually obtained from the rural development budget and not from the general budget of the CAP.12 In this regard, there is an obvious need for a shift in the overwhelming agricultural orientation of rural development programs within the EU (and subsequently at the national and regional levels).

Within the context of new rural development policies that should tackle other economic sectors, this thesis has proven that there are opportunities for the successful incorporation of historic preservation into the toolbox of rural development. However, this should not imply the substitution of an agriculture-based model for an exclusively heritage-based model, rather the consideration of heritage resources (natural, cultural, tangible, and intangible) as assets for economic development. In this sense, rural development programs should not argue for the preservation of rural heritage per se, rather for its incorporation into realistic, multidisciplinary, economic development programs for rural regions.

B. Recognition and Encouragement of the Entire Local Community

Although the European Parliament has recently recognized that there is a need to “better involve local communities, civil society, and the private sector in both the preservation and promotion of activities related to cultural heritage,” in fact, that recognition has not yet pervaded

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12 Ibid.
European policy. In this sense, as has been emphasized throughout this thesis, the European Union has only recognized the role that farmers play as stewards of natural heritage, creating specific policies and budgetary measures to do so. However, the role that the local community (as a whole) performs in preserving the landscape, and more specifically its essential role in the preservation of cultural, tangible and intangible heritage (illustrated by Ms. Giménez attempt to restore the *Ecce Homo* fresco), has not yet been explicitly acknowledged.

In this sense, according to the increasing interest in heritage of the European institutions, it seems feasible that, very much like the already achieved recognition of farmers, the longstanding but informal system of common stewardship of cultural heritage carried out by rural communities should be also recognized. Furthermore, it should also be encouraged by specific budgetary measures, training, employment opportunities, and even direct payments, as the recognition of farmers has implied. This recognition by the EU will indeed align with the aforementioned vision of former Commissioner Vassiliou about the development of EU-funded “innovative forms of community-oriented management that can enhance the economic and social potential of cultural heritage and contribute to the well-being of citizens.” In this regard, new EU policies should just acknowledge that those forms of community-oriented management are already in place, and that they could be used as powerful tools to achieve both the preservation of valuable rural heritage resources and the creation of economic growth.

C. Emphasis on the Participation of Youth and Women

Finally, along with the necessary acknowledgement of the role of other local actors (beyond farmers) in the maintenance of rural communities (and in particular in the preservation of rural heritage), new non-agriculture based rural development programs should also specifically address the involvement and participation of youth and women. In this regard, the European rural population (especially in Southern Europe) is highly aged and increasingly male. As a result, the opportunities for natural population growth are very limited. In this sense, it seems that the sustainability of rural areas is going to depend on the reversal of those facts. Rural development

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programs should therefore attempt to both encourage youth and female members of rural communities to stay, and to attract a new, younger, and female population to these communities.

In this regard, as Douwe van der Ploeg and Renting have pointed out, the role of women in rural areas is especially significant. Rural women have traditionally developed an earlier consciousness about the practical unsuitability of the modernization of farms, even in highly subsidized environments, and they have also traditionally led the initiative to out-migrate. At the same, it has also been precisely women who have acted as the primary caretakers of cultural, rural heritage, both tangible and intangible. Therefore, it is mandatory that rural development programs address how to facilitate the stay (and employment) of women in rural areas.

6.2. Conclusion

Through the case study, and the literature and policy reviews whose findings are summarized in the previous chapter, this thesis has demonstrated that historic preservation could, and should, play a bigger role in rural development strategies to be implemented in depopulating, inland Spain. Moreover, if the research and policy recommendations presented in this chapter are adequately addressed, the preservation of rural heritage resources (natural, cultural, tangible, and intangible) could more successfully contribute to social cohesion and economic growth in rural areas and, as a result, to revert their depopulation.

This thesis has also robustly demonstrated that a more integrated, multidisciplinary approach to the fields of rural studies, rural heritage, and rural development is needed. “Behind the Ecce Homo” lay the character-defining features of small, rural communities, the failure of common historic preservation tools (such as designation) in rural areas, and the inability of rural development strategies to take advantage of the cultural, social, and economic value of heritage resources. Therefore, it stands to reason that these issues are tackled altogether in the design, development, and implementation of new rural development policies that could ensure the preservation of heritage resources along with that of the local, rural communities themselves.

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Castejón de Tornos has lost 87% of its population since 1950.
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Figure 3.14  Oficina de Turismo – Comarca de Daroca.
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