

LARGE MEDITERRANEAN ISLANDS AND THEIR NEW EMERGING  
ROLE TOWARDS A MEDITERRANEAN COHESION :  
Digital Nomadism and New Citizenship



IOANNIS

PETROULAKIS

## THESIS

LARGE MEDITERRANEAN ISLANDS AND  
THEIR NEW EMERGING ROLE TOWARDS  
A MEDITERRANEAN COHESION : Digital  
Nomadism and New Citizenship

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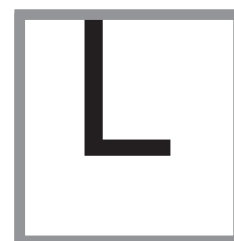
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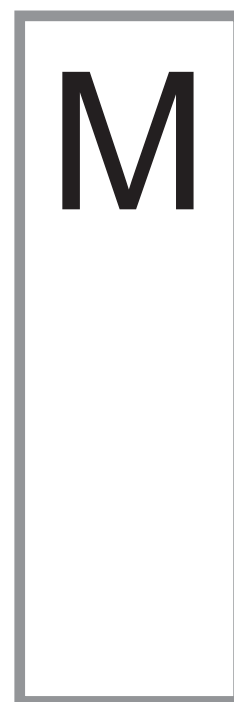
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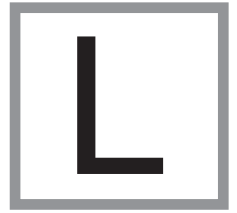
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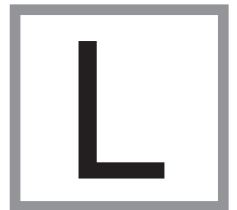
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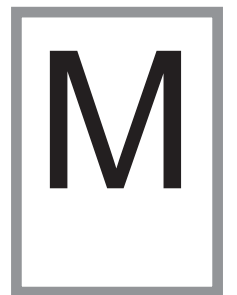
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# ABSTRACT

The Mediterranean is a dimensional existence that expresses polymorphy where its ambiguous borders represent a complexity that in a way defines the identity of Europe. It is fundamental to investigate the syncretism of the Mediterranean both on a theoretical and administrative basis. In order to envision a possible future of the Great Sea it is essential to explore historical and philosophical views from a variety of scholars as well as go through European, National, and Regional planning policies of the Union using a multiscale top down and bottom up approach to bridge those findings. The main focus is on the insular territories of Europe and specifically the six largest islands of the Mediterranean. Post economic crisis period and the current Covid-19 pandemic has brought more than ever the world to experience what it is to live in an insular context. The paper aims to investigate and define possible zones of development on those large six islands both on regional and local scale based on the perspective of an emerging new citizen, the digital nomad. This recent worldwide phenomenon of nomadism is explored and questioned if it can work as a catalyst against certain challenges those insular territories face as well as to be seen contributing towards the repopulation of the countryside in general. Pilot projects and case studies as well as statistics, maps and sense of place notional representations are used as territorial spatial analysis tools in order to envision a potential, maybe utopic, Archipelagic Federation of the Mediterranean; a leasing urbanism space inhabited by the digital nomad, as the new Odysseus.

Key words : Mediterranean, Digital nomads, Utopia, Islands, Archipelagos, Cohesion

## CHAPTER 0

## THEORY

### 01. THE MEDITERRANEAN

#### 01.a Definition

The definition of Polymorphy. Fundamental element of the ‘method ‘ of Europe is the appearance of matter. Expressing polymorphy is fundamental for the matter. That’s why we have to maintain polymorphy, but in order to do that we have first to understand it and categorise it. The Mediterranean concept is all about syncretism, a constant voyage in an archipelagos that aims to collect, compare and make choices towards common ground, an entity diverse that is rediscovered through its absence. The myth where the epiphany of the conflict takes place and syncretism is its product. A tragedy where constantly develops a dual conflictual dialogue between permanent and temporary, order and chaos, private and public, divine and mortal, an unstable space which thanks to its ambiguity becomes a fertile tool for constant regeneration, a complexity that defines the identity of Europe. (Tzompanakis, 2011, pp. 19-22).

#### 01.b Spatial Borders

According to Braudel the borders of the Mediterranean are defined by the presence of olive trees in the north and the presence of palm trees in the south, but the cultural and economic influence expands much further away. The mediterranean is not one entity, it consists of several seas full of dispersed islands and divided by peninsulas and inland areas, a polycentric geography that designs cities, ports, territories interconnected with marine highways making in that way that every point at the same time the centre or the periphery of another. As P. Matvejevic says it's an entity that supersedes the definition of centre or periphery, where borders are porous fronts formed by centuries of historic and cultural collisions. There doesn't exist a single Mediterranean culture, there are a lot that form one Mediterranean, a phenomenal experience where space is not a mathematical model but a dimensional existence. Its not a trajectory which traverses space but its the narrative of the traversed space which defines Mediterranean space. (Tzompanakis, 2011, p. 21). Locality and deterritorialization is what happens simultaneously in the spatial Mediterranean.

## 01.c Topography & Climate

The climate itself is the average between the two continents that borders Europe and Africa, having long summer, short spring, mild winter starting from autumn. Its Mountains are cold and give an unexpected view of the Mediterranean to visitors. It's a static period, an introverted time for diplomatic relations. If mountains are the less populated areas the valleys are the most densely. Traditionally the mountain population is known for nomadic life which nowadays has been less nomadic and there is absence of periodic professions, however, the mountain population was sustainable and independent. Traditional societies we find usually inland of the territories. Mountains are the main areas that maintain transition. The strong mountains dissecting and radically tough the sea on its north shores but at the south shores the desert plain and vast creates a different effect, that dyadic identity that nature created creates tension but the history managed to mix those elements. Between 200-400m above sea level is the ideal zone to live in the med. Has less cold than the mountains and less heat than the valleys. This zone has the highest concentration of urban clusters in the med which have not a clear scale of urban clusters and the population is distributed equally. (Modinos, 2001, pp. 15-29; Braudel, 2006, pp. 55-69)

The most important zones of the Mediterranean are the transition from liquid to solid element, the seas, the islands and the areas near them, a universe in constant movement where everything is led to, people, products and services. A fragmented system in constant action equivalent to its geological base which is built upon, characterised by young soil, action and evolution. Diverse spatial entities united under common climate and driven by an exchange economy universe.

## 01.d People

People of the med live in cities because in the countryside they stay only as long as they need to. They are farmers from need not by choice. The resources are limited and humans maximise the potential that land has to offer. They cannot do more. Important is to survive but most important is to live in a social way, working in teams. The Med has a unity because of the small cities and towns network that keep her alive. The cities are not born from the countryside but the countryside comes from the cities. If there are nomads they camp based on fundamental rules and unchangeable rules. If they are permanent population create cities with always same pattern, like the romans did 100 people that live with basic needs that Mediterraena offers can make a city where in the North 200 people can hardly make a village. The smallest village is a microcosm of a city that based its powers on team working. (Modinos, 2001, pp. 15-29)

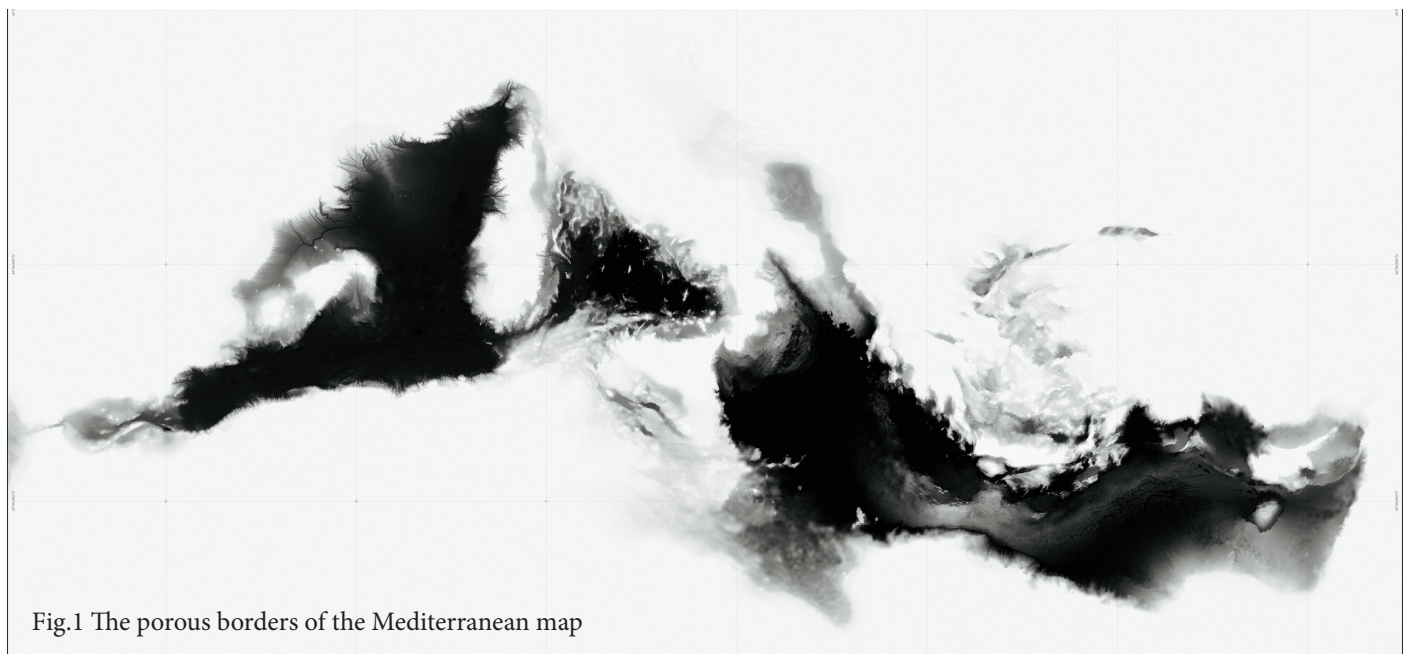


Fig.1 The porous borders of the Mediterranean map



## 1.1 EUROPE & THE MEDITERRANEAN

Most countries have three scale of government, ranging from the national to provincial and local. In response to significant decentralisation, globalisation, and urbanisation, subnational governing arrangements are forming, and this level is increasingly seen as the best spatial scale for efficiently utilising governing capacity. However regional governments do not have usually administration and juridial tools. They typically rely on voluntary coordination and cooperation instead. With the support of more conventional forms of government, local and provincial governments can fight back against these networks to safeguard their own authority.

The distinctive view of some important scholars help us to understand the med in three different ways. Braudel sees it as one human geographic entity formed by its climate, its nomads and its long cultural history while Samuel Huntington sees it as a sea which is divided by 3 string canyons geographically as well in terms of civilization. Islam, west civilasation and easter orthodox. Lastly a mediterranean which the globalisation forces europe to speed up the economic stability into the south and create free trade zones, a model that can be called mediterranean world trade centre. The above views are conflictual because they see the med both as a threat and opportunity. It's a hard synthesis because the EU cannot see NorthAfrican states as an ally and enemy at the same time. In that sense the med can never be an equal ally of Europe nor its opponent, but what it can be is an intermediate area zone which tensions can be softer up, a zone where spatially and culturally diverse and ambiguous. A hybrid zone (Modinos, 2001)

### 1.1a. Historic Timeline of The Euro Mediterranean Relations

The North African and Minor Asian coasts were a fully colonised area. With Napoleon's campaigns to Egypt in late 1700, modern, organised imperialism—as opposed to the random amassing of lands —started in the Med. When France left Algeria in 1962, this methodical, imperial management of land came to an end in the Mediterranean as well. According to Chambers (2008, pp. 140-151) over the course of more than two centuries, European warfare decimates the southern and oriental shores, wreaking havoc in Egypt, Algiers, Libya, Mesopotamia, El Alamein, Suez, and Israel/Palestine. From 1800 to 1945, the Mediterranean was a “French lake” of colonial aspirations and imperial planning, both militarily and politically. The Mediterranean sea remains an elusive space, not to be possessed but to be seen as a journey of wisdom.

Along with rebuilding, post-war Europe also had to cope with how its states interacted with its colonies and former colonies. These connections had been made formal with the inclusion of those countries as EU members. At that time, the Mediterranean was not a top priority. From 1957 to 1971, the only official interactions between Mediterranean governments were bilateral trade agreements.

The foundation of the Global Mediterranean Policy was laid in 1972 at the historic summit in Paris. In practice, however, the policy was divided into three groups: the Maghreb countries, which included the former French colonies of Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria; Israel; the Mashrid countries, which included Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan; and the European Mediterranean nations, which included Turkey, Cyprus, Malta, Yugoslavia, Greece, Portugal, and Spain. These agreements largely dealt with business, but they also covered financial matters. However, in actuality, the bilateral accords took precedence.

Greece, Spain and Portugal entered the Eu family in 1981 & 1986, which brought fundamental changes in the EU and the Mediterranean because now countries producing similar products had to compete with each other. EU decided with financial support to empower their economies, which brought fundamental changes on produce and agriculture, in reality making those countries less self-sufficient and swifiting agricultural

economy into the tourism industry which started booming with the increased flight connectivity. High unemployment rates and a weak economy affected the Mediterranean countries as a result of insufficient bilateral agreements and financial support measures.

The collapse of the Berlin wall in 1989 resulted in emerging new east European states that wanted to enter the EU family. That left out from the EU agenda the Mediterranean, whose economies with the increase of globalisation did not remain anymore inclusive. In order to tackle the problem the new focus was to modernise the administrative and commercial sectors and the Barcelona convention in 1995 made the Mediterranean as a distinctive entity for the first time after the Roman empire. That was a milestone decision which since then the question still exists if the med will be an independent political area or will it continue to be part of Europe. If there is a unity in the Mediterranean, it is perhaps a hidden, critical “unity” where the sea itself, as the site of dispersion and drift, exposes the fragility of inherited configurations.

For Europe now territory still matters. European policies aim to produce spatial plans and vision in order to allocate more efficiently their Cohesion funds. The diversity of towns and cities of Europe make it a complicated space with tradition and not a flat free empty space with unconstrained development possibilities.

### 1.1b. Territorial Scenarios and Vision of Europe 2030

At the Dublin ESPON MC meeting, four workshops related to the ET2050 research project were organised (June 2013). In order to learn more about how the MC members see the future of Europe on various scales and in relation to multiple factors (such as the economy, environment, and migrations). The aim was to envision Europe and the world, ESPON space with the neighbouring states and ESPON space with its regions.

For the future development of Europe vision for 2030 have been presented the following:

(Scenario A) “market based growth favouring large metropolis”

(Scenario B) “public policies promoting secondary city networks”

(Scenario C) “public policies with more social and regional redistribution at European level”

According to the forecast models applied, based on the assumptions for framework conditions and policies established :

The forecast results showed that scenario B has better results in terms of GDP (+2,30% yearly), A scenario (+2,20% yearly), C scenario (1,80% yearly).

The higher GDP in B can be explained that territorial capital resources concentrated on large and medium cities allow local economies to be more competitive and promote a more equilibrated urban system where both large and medium cities collaborate better and avoid diseconomies of scale that can block economic prosperity. Scenario B appears to have the highest cohesion because it creates a differentiated and scattered distribution of territorial capital which consist of a variety of settlements and regional assets that have a variety complexity and development directives.



## 1.1c. Territorial Scenarios and Vision of Europe 2050

The same four workshop participants had to reflect on five maps their vision of Europe 2050 basing their aspects on socio-political, economic, transport infrastructure, migration as well designating zones fertile for co-operation, investment and heritage and environment. The set of maps that have been under discussion where:

Maps 1 and 2 of the ESPON space looking ahead to 2050 (GEAT-ULB, 2014, p. 85) show how people move within Europe due to migration and tourism. The goal is for Europe to be a location where moving freely is made possible by simple migrations across locations. With a proper distribution of migratory flows across the European continent, a worldwide pattern of migration that is balanced should also be attained. From the same vantage point, tourism flows outside of Europe were observed more perforated and less concentrated flows on Southern Europe and a wide range of travel destinations.

- The Baltic/Mediterranean Sea is considered a possible future development axis:

An upgrade of transportation links between North and South Europe and East and West will enhance human flows between all directions.

- Slow Europe: This organisation bases its vision of Europe's potential future on Slow Cities and Slow Ports. Europe 2050 is supposed to be built on a network of green cities that collaborate and share knowledge in a variety of ways. This will be related to a "slow transit" method of travelling to Europe without using any domestic airspace.



Fig.2 ESPON space towards 2050 vision workshops maps (1, 2,3)

In Europe 2050, according to this group, the macroregions will be strengthened spatial entities. Six major macro-regions are concentrated along a north-south axis, which is identified as follows:

- Northern Europe (Iceland, Northern Scandinavian countries)
- Baltic Sea region (Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Denmark, Northern Germany and Northern Poland)
- The Danube and Central Europe (Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary)
- Area of the Alps (Middle-Western France, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, Northern Italy, Slovenia)
- Balkan region (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, FYROM, Albania, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania)
- The region of the Mediterranean (Southern and Western Spain, Southern France, Italy, Greece, Cyprus)

Map 4 Regional Europe towards 2050 (GEAT-ULB, 2014, p. 88-89)

This group concentrates on middle size regions of cooperation:

- West Mediterranean Islands (Balears, Corse, Sardinia and Sicily)
- Central Mediterranean Sea / Adriatic Coast (Italy & West Balkans)
- Eastern Mediterranean Islands (Cyprus, Greece, Turkey)
- The Danube basin (Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Serbia, Croatia, Austria, Southern Germany)
- The Alpine countries (Switzerland, Northern Italy, Austria)
- North Western Europe (South-Eastern England, Benelux, Western Germany)
- Baltic Region (Scandinavian Countries, Baltic States, Northern Poland, Northern Germany, Denmark) and Iceland

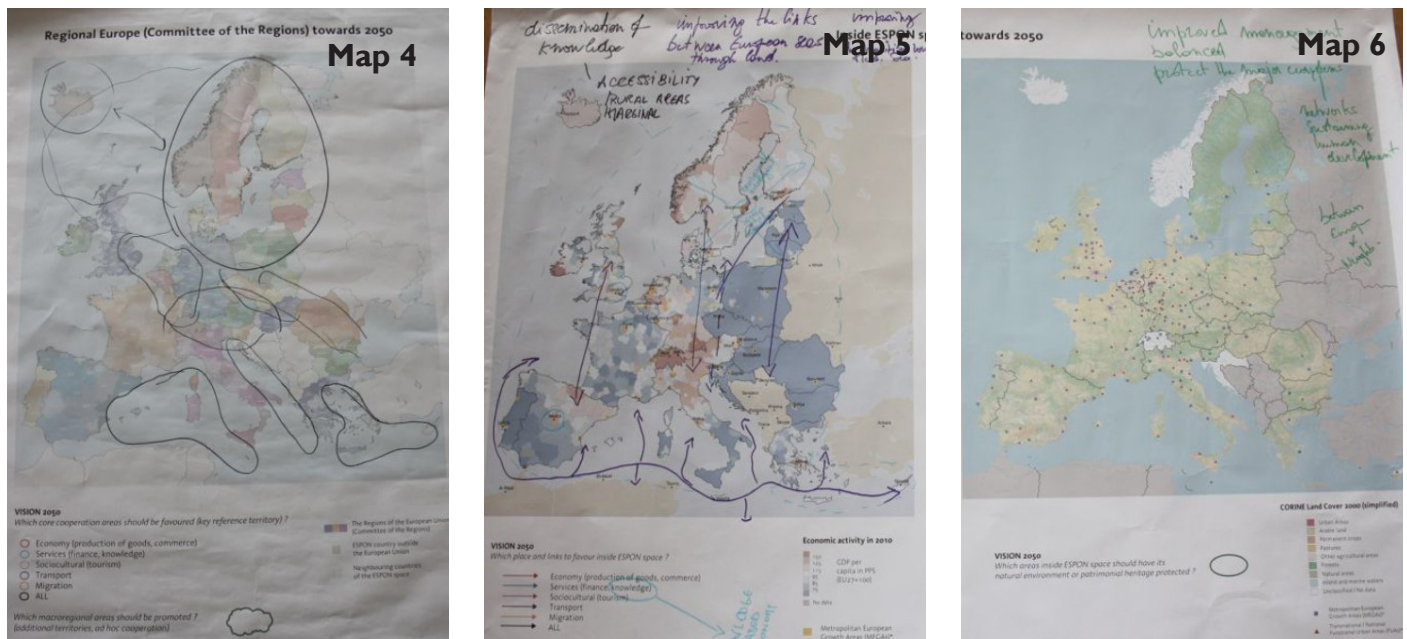


Fig.3 ESPON space towards 2050 vision workshops maps (4, 5, 6)

Map 5 & 6 Inside ESPON space towards 2050 (GEAT-ULB, 2014, p. 88-89)

Four specific points were identified for Europe 2050 in relations with both maps:

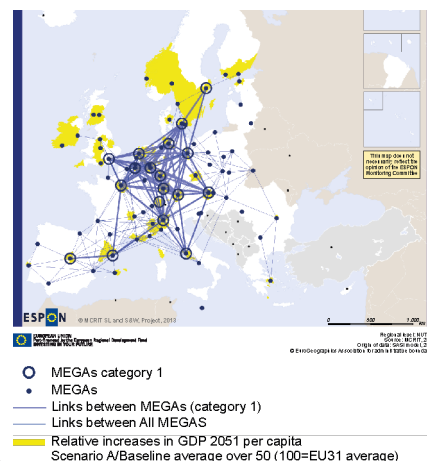
- A knowledge-based economy: Europe's governance will base its governance on networks which promote exchange of good practices, such as green cities that can be pioneer examples for other cities. The knowledge based economy will promote accessibility of peripheral and marginalised areas. Every city should be a centre of excellence in one specific knowledge area and play role in the dissemination of knowledge improvement all over Europe.
- Better connected seas:  
In 2050 Europe, high quality land connectivity between North and South seas will enhance territorial cohesion.
- Improved maritime routes:  
In 2050 Europe, the maritime routes will be improved with focus on the Mediterranean where it plays a strategic role on linking neighbouring countries in order to minimise environmental impact and improve maritime transport.
- A well managed European environment:  
The focus will be on sustainability where well balanced policies for better management of ecosystems will guarantee strong environmental networks which will enhance human development as well as promote better collaboration with neighbouring countries.

The three scenarios developed for 2030 (A, B and C) have been redefined for 2050 in more explicit territorial terms. To deal with the increasing uncertainty of a longer time horizon, these three alternative territorial scenarios for 2050 are evaluated against different extreme framework socioeconomic and environmental conditions. The purpose of the exercise is not predicting likely futures but assessing the alternative territorial strategies in terms of economic growth, regional disparities, land-use taken and the environmental impact because of transport activities, in energy and emissions. Next, the three territorial scenarios are defined:

The promotion and networking of European Metropolises towards 2050 (Territorial Scenario

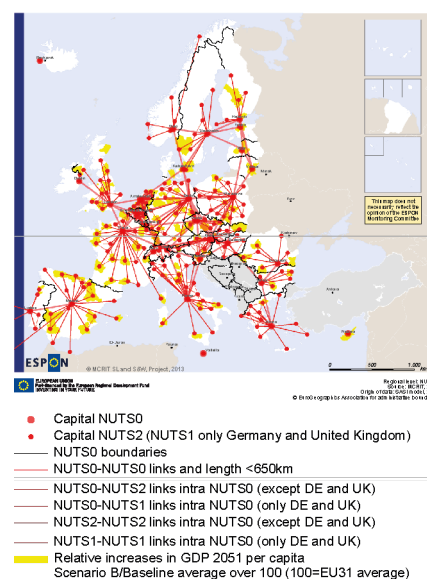
A) would involve the further development of capital and global metropolis, as well as existing global gateways. It follows to a large extent the Europe 2020 strategy of promoting global competitiveness of Europe by facilitating the economic development of the largest metropolitan areas of global importance in Europe, i.e. of the 76 Metropolitan European Growth Areas (MEGAs) defined in ESPON (ET2050. 2014, p.84)

Fig.4 Scenario A Metropolitan Europe 2050 ( source : ESPON)



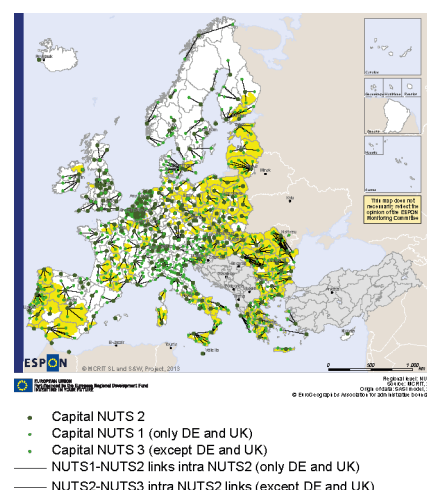
The promotion and networking of cities towards 2050 (Territorial Scenario B) provides an image of the European territory in which economic and population growth, as well as most private and public investments, take place within national capitals and major regional capitals, and there is a geographic reorganisation and specialisation of global gateways. It follows the priority of the European Spatial Development Perspective (1999) and the two Territorial Agendas (2007; 2011) for balanced polycentric urban systems at the macro-regional or national scale for the 261 cities of European or national significance defined in ESPON (ET2050. 2014, p.85)

Fig.5 Scenario B Medium Cities Europe 2050 ( source : ESPON)



The promotion of small cities and less developed regions towards 2050 (Territorial Scenario C) provides an image of the European territory in which urban and rural territories form a mosaic of different regions and types of territories with identities nourished by local and regional governments able to cooperate in areas of common interest. This scenario involves a paradigm-shift and responds to the challenges of energy scarcity and climate change expressed in the Territorial Agenda 2020 (2011) by promoting small and medium-sized cities as centres of self-contained and economically resilient regions with more sustainable mobility patterns yet taking account of the necessary economies of scale of services of general interest and the prospects of an ageing society (ESPON. ET2050. 2014, p.85)

Fig.6 Scenario C Rural Europe 2050 ( source : ESPON)





## 1.1d. How Macroregions envision themselves

Understanding how different European macro-regions already see themselves in the future by thinking on and drafting policy documents outlining their future development is essential to understanding how Europe sees its future. These kinds of materials were widely generated in Europe over the past ten years during a time of economic expansion when future optimism was encouraged (GEAT-ULB, 2014, p. 100-102). This is significant in the context of this study because, although being based on scenarios that are far less positive in the context of the current economic crisis, the Vision should be viewed as an optimistic outlook and a dream of the future of Europe. To build up this very first step, the EU have used a set of sources that are illustrated by the figure above. This figure helps to show how specific macro-regions of Europe define their own future. This gives an overview of many important issues that are related, at first, to territorial ones, which are at the core of the Vision design

The vision is based on the variety of European territory, Urban, Rural, Coastal and Island which faces common problems for their future development as well as the interaction between them in order to reflect a common European future on economy, ecology and society prospects.

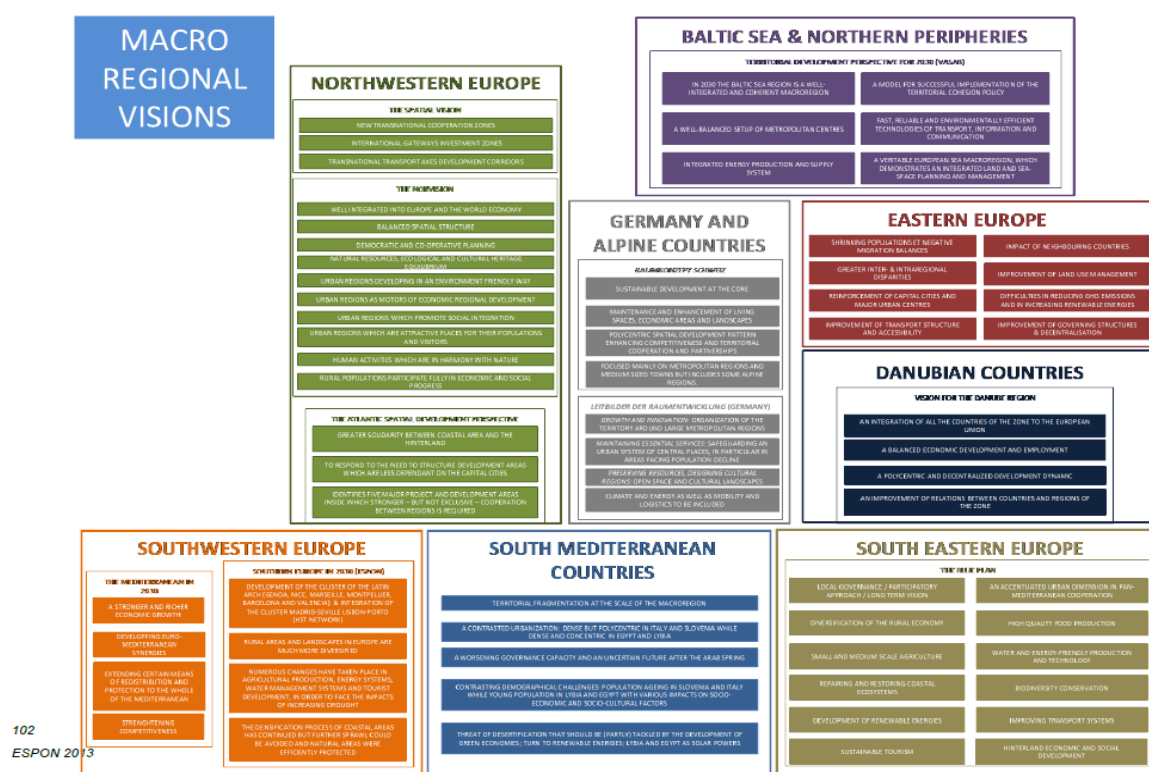


Fig.7 How regions envision themselves (source : ESPON)

## 1.1e. Possible outcome

The growth of Europe in long terms doesn't appear to be conditioned by the redistribution of those policies. The long-term effects of the promotion of any of the three stated tactics on economic growth are minimal (A, B and C). The productivity gains brought about by technology advancements and government measures like fiscal and monetary policy are the main drivers of economic development. Therefore, under the identical framework conditions, scenarios A, B, and C will result in equal average economic growth for all of Europe by 2050, indicating that under these circumstances, agglomeration economies will have a very limited role as a growth driver in Europe.

Relative regional development gaps are significantly reduced by redistributive policies.

Even though they are not above the current levels (0,4% of European GDP), policies transferring resources into peripheral and second-tier cities, as specified in scenarios B and C, are effective at closing economic gaps without slowing down Europe's overall economic growth. The allocation of resources to services and infrastructures that genuinely help to raise the productivity of the regions is a fundamental presumption in modelling. (GEAT-ULB, 2014, p. 100-105)

Absolute regional gaps will likely remain.

Gaps are only reduced in relative terms; in absolute terms, the gap of nowadays hardly will be reduced unless much stronger redistributive policies (than the present 0,4% of European GDP) are applied

Polycentric territorial structures induce more balanced growth.

More polycentric structures result in more evenly distributed growth over time if polycentricity is determined by combining population size and economic growth distribution among the cities in a specific region or nation. The most developed cities and regions in Europe work together as pieces of a polycentric system, adding value and serving as centres that advance their larger territories.

Specific outcome on each scenario

**IF (A)** territorial scenario is applied.

This scenario which focuses more on attracting people in the metropolis will eventually give great pressure on land use planning due to high demand of land and the construction of high rise buildings which will intensify density. The main downside of this scenario are the diseconomies of scale and the appearance of urban sprawl and endless suburbia. That can be avoided with strict land use regulations. Another great risk is the depopulation of the countryside which is already intense as a post WWII phenomenon.

**IF (B)** territorial scenario is applied.

It is expected a more balanced growth throughout Europe as middle cities will keep land use more manageable and their relationship with the hinterland will provide more opportunities for balanced and better quality landscape in both urban and rural areas.

**IF (B)** territorial scenario is applied.

This is a bottom-up approach which will benefit rural areas and help to maintain high quality and more protected ecosystems. The hinterland will be vibrant but also in order to achieve that will be required the most policy interventions in land use management. Good collaboration and cohesion will be promoted to stimulate and enhance less favoured areas. The main threat is the fragmentation of the landscape due to more diffused developments.

According to the ESPON reports (Interreg Euro-MED 2021/27 Programme 202, pp. 5-10) on “Territorial Cooperation for the Future of Europe (2017)” and “State of the European Territory (2019)”:

In lagging and peripheral rural regions,

The need is to promote and exploit local knowledge such as cultural and natural heritage which have the potential to become zones for economic development and lay the foundation for local knowhow to be transferred and exchanged with other zones and in larger scales of administration. There is a need to focus on infrastructure and public-private cooperation that will enhance trans-regional and transnational cooperation.

In less developed, peripheral regions,

Those regions due to be less path dependent, they can become zones where more experimentation possibilities can take place as their innovative ecosystems can adapt more easily. There should be focus on supporting and upgrading existing innovations, because doing things like that is less risky and costly than attempting to create new knowledge. Testing highly innovative economic actors in less economic zones can be more easily successive.

In imitative innovation regions,

Those regions need to be more extroverted and give emphasis to strong entrepreneurial activities that promote acquisition of knowledge from outside the region and use it in combination with local knowledge. That can be achieved by scouting and sourcing external knowledge through workshops and activities of new and old local firms that develop complementary projects with multinational corporations.

## 1.2 IDENTIFICATION OF THE TERRITORY

### 1.2a. Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS)

EU for monitoring and in order to establish more sufficient cohesion policies have categorised its territory into NUTS clusters. (EUROSTAT, 2020). The NUTS is based on Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 May 2003 on the establishment of a common classification of territorial units for statistics (NUTS), which is regularly updated. The current NUTS nomenclature, applicable from 1 January 2018, subdivides the economic territory of the European Union and the UK into:

1345 regions at NUTS 3 level usually group of regional units.

283 regions at NUTS 2 level such as administrative regions

104 regions at NUTS 1 level which are large territories like countries

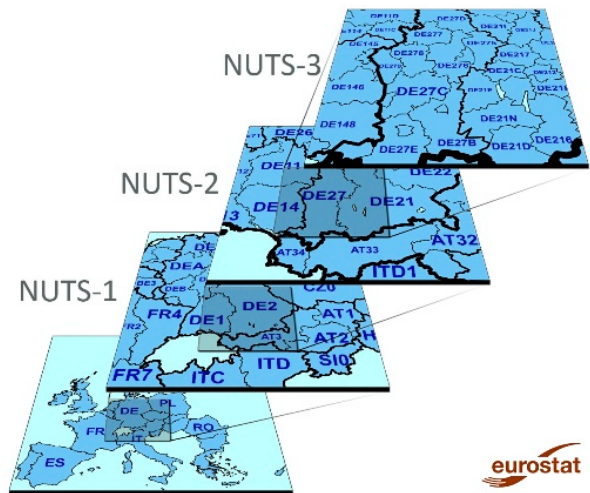


Fig.8 NUTS Classification ( source : ESPON)

Three territorial codes were defined for the 2014-2020 period.

Codes 01-03 define territories by analysing the density based on population using sq km population grid:

Code 01: Cities and urban centres where population is over 50.000 and have high density.

Code 02: Small towns and suburbs with medium density and population more than 5000.

Code 03: Rural areas that live outside urban zones and have low population density.. (Walsh J, 2019)

NB: From the EU population, 42% live in cities, 31% live in smaller urban clusters and 27% live in the countryside.

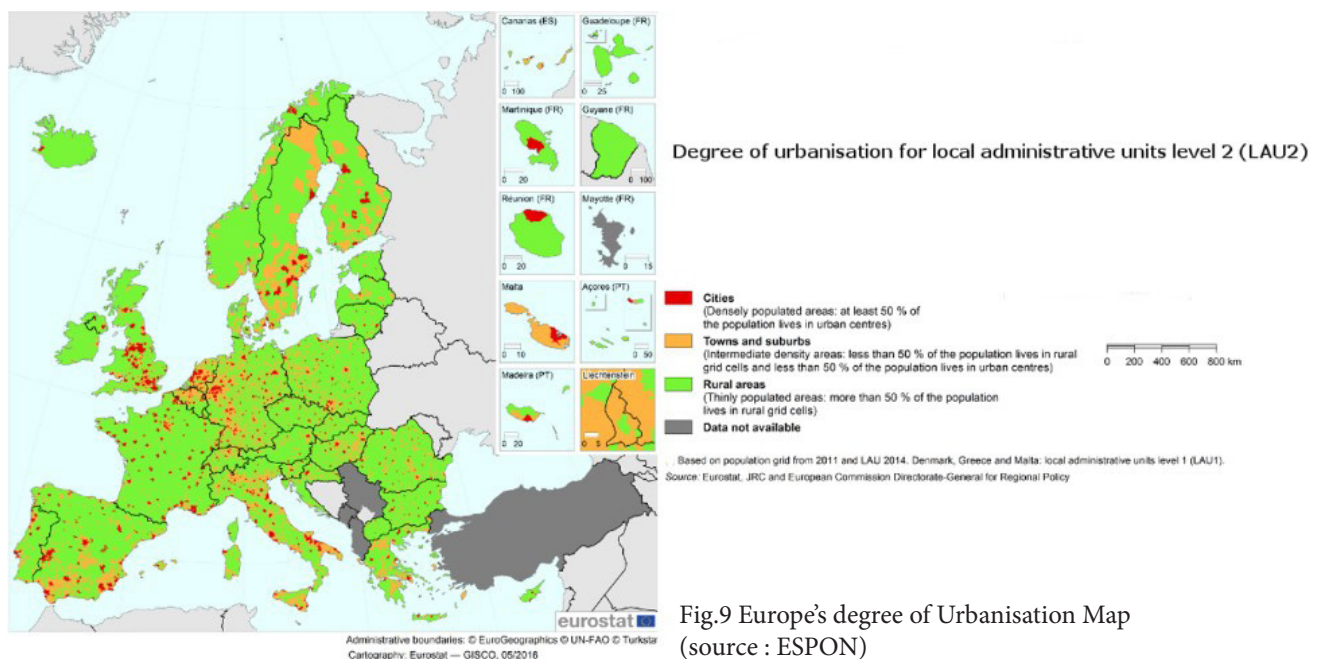


Fig.9 Europe's degree of Urbanisation Map (source : ESPON)



The EU in order to evaluate and provide assistance to less favoured areas has divided the territories into four groups:

- Coastal/ maritime areas
- Islands
- Rural and Mountain areas
- Urban areas

To balance territorial development is needed good interaction between all the above territorial typologies and to be supported by specific contribution generated from macro-regional strategies and sea -basin strategies.

In relation to other specific territories – Ultra peripheral regions (RUPs), Islands, Mountains, Sparsely populated regions - codes for these purposes were not defined for 2014-2020 (in contrast to the period 2007-2013). The Commission considers that RUPs territories can more reliably be identified at the level of the specific programmes.

For the Islands, Mountains and Sparsely populated regions the Commission has listed the NUTS 3 regions (2010 NUTS classification) that would be so characterised. In overview that reference table identifies a total number of specific territories as follows:

319 Mountainous regions;

70 Island regions;

18 Sparsely populated regions.

## 1.2b. The European Islands

EU has not any specific definition of “ island” in the Treaty, but the declaration on article 174 TFEU states that “island regions can include island states in their entirety, subject to necessary criteria being met”. The EU Parliament in 2016 adopted a resolution on specific situation of islands, asking for clear definitions of insular challenges. EU has urged the need for actions to be taken in order those insular territories to contribute to the sustainable development of the Union.

According to Euroislands Espon 2013 report there are 362 inhabited islands with a population over 50 people and 228 with a population less than 50 people.. The classification of the islands according their population defines as : large islands (15 in total ) with above 50k population which 5 of them have population above 500k, as medium size ( 44 in total ) with population between 5k -50k, small islands ( 303 in total ) with population 50 to 5k and very small islands ( 228 in total ) with population less than 50 inhabitants ( Spilani I., Kizos T., Vaitis M., Koukourouvli N., 2013)

Islands are classified as NUT3 but can be composed of more than one island, but some islands belong to NUTS 3 regions but cover also continental areas that's why are not categorised as islands but as island units and are also classified as NUTS 2

## 1.2c. The Island Commission (CPMR)

As its name implies, the Conference of the Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR) and the Island Commission represents the common interests of the maritime periphery regions of Europe. It was founded in Saint-Malo in 1973 and has about 150 member areas, making it one of the major inter-regional organisations in Europe. The CPMR is supported by its members and is run by its General Assembly, an elected Political Bureau, and a President. Its actions are decentralised and overseen by a Secretariat General through 7 Geographic Commissions (Baltic, North Sea, Mediterranean, Balkans, Black Sea, Atlantic and Islands).

The "Islands Commission," which was established in 1981, is the oldest of these Commissions. Currently, it brings together 25 island regional authorities, representing more than 13 million European inhabitants (four of which are not EU members). It has a distinct structure (President, Political Bureau, Secretariat, etc.). Its goals are to increase inter-island collaboration and raise awareness of the issues facing Europe's islands among the EU Institutions, Member States, and the general public.

## 1.2d. Islands - Insular territories characteristics

Under extensive investigation on the topic the Author found out that the specific report OFF THE COAST OF EUROPE European Construction and the problem of the islands - study undertaken by EURILS and the Initiative of the Islands Commission of CPMR 2002 summarises the strengths and constraints of insular territories. This research report constitutes a fountain of information thus the author draws on its material. I appose :

### Population

Based on Eurostat data, in 2020, the European island regions were home to a total population of over 20 500 000 inhabitants, which is 2% more than the population the same regions had in 2016. Island inhabitants represent 4.6% of the EU's population—dwell in one of the 21 island regional authorities that make up the EU 15; the remaining individuals reside on one of the hundreds of coastal islands that dot Europe's coastline. In comparison to the populations of the Member States, these islands have a moderate or even negligible population. Their population just approaches 12% of the total population in Greece and Italy. The islands are far less significant in France (under 3%), Portugal (6%), and Spain (6%).

### Proximity and calculating insularity

While it is true that minimum distances are obtained by calculating each island's isolation based on the distance between the island and the closest coast. In at least 10 instances, the closest mainland area to an island region's capital it doesn't not belong to the same nation, sometimes, does not even belong to the same continent. In reality, however, the most frequently utilised transportation routes on an island are rarely those that link it to the closest area, which may moreover be a desert, a mountain barrier, or even another island! What counts as distance is more the proximity to economic and administrative centres on which depends to. The difference can be rather substantial.

### Population and space: limited resources

Islands limited space and low human dynamics determine the level of insularity. Europe's concept is a single space of 550 million people; it mostly refers to the mainland and not for the islands which are considering and feel a single space as their own territory. So the EU single space is more of an abstract concept than a reality for them, that's why in order to understand the relationship between man and space on an island, it is necessary to look beyond the most obvious statistics. The available space is not necessarily the actual surface area that can be used in an island due to topography or policy restrictions (mountain islands, where part of the territory is virtually unusable) or environmental constraints (protected areas, land on which it is forbidden to build) must also be taken into account. Decline demographics, old population, and urban density has to do with the absorption of activities on the coastal zones.

### Permanent and pervasive realities

Living on an island implies being permanently cut off from the rest of the world by the sea, with few space availability, natural or human resources, or market size. These various elements, while they may fluctuate greatly in nature or strength from one island to the next, are nonetheless constant and all-pervasive reality. Islands are always smaller than the mainland, which is a universal truth. Smallness denotes rarity due to the species' endemism to the islands. Although this rarity takes many different forms, the scarcity and lack of resources serve as the fundamental yardsticks for measuring it (raw materials, infrastructures, human potentialities, etc.). Islands' high dependence on imports and the rare extrovert economy makes their domestic GDP to be fragile and low because usually their economies are characterised by a single product activity.

### Drop of agriculture and urbanisation of the coast

The transition from a mixed food production system—which was previously crucial given dictates island economy--which affects traditional methods of agriculture and engagement with it resulted in the abandonment of the rural habitat and stepped terraces. The lack of large flat areas restrictive land structures brought on by the abundance of small and fragmented plots and issues with joint ownership or tenancy, little farms without investment resources, frequently scarce water resources, dwindling numbers of people having the know how of the job, small local markets, and, especially, the allure of the coast all impede the normal development of agriculture in the islands.

Most island's coastal zones are urbanised. Especially the ones where the coastal length is in disproportion with the inland regions. From Greece's 15.000 km of coastline, 7.700 comes from its islands, while the entire Mediterranean coastline is 46.000km. The post WWII increased tourism trend has contributed to rapid urbanisation of the coast with huge threats for the quality of the sea and coastal zones. In Corsica, for example, where just over 30% of the coast is currently urbanised, 28% of these newly urbanised areas were previously agricultural lands, and 62% encroached on natural zones. This increased urbanisation of the coast springs from several causes. The morphology of the islands are primarily mountainous with few flatlands. People prefer to settle on the coast because it is easier to move and trade with outside populations. The increase of tourism and decline of the agriculture sector has contributed to the displacement of internal populations towards the coast.

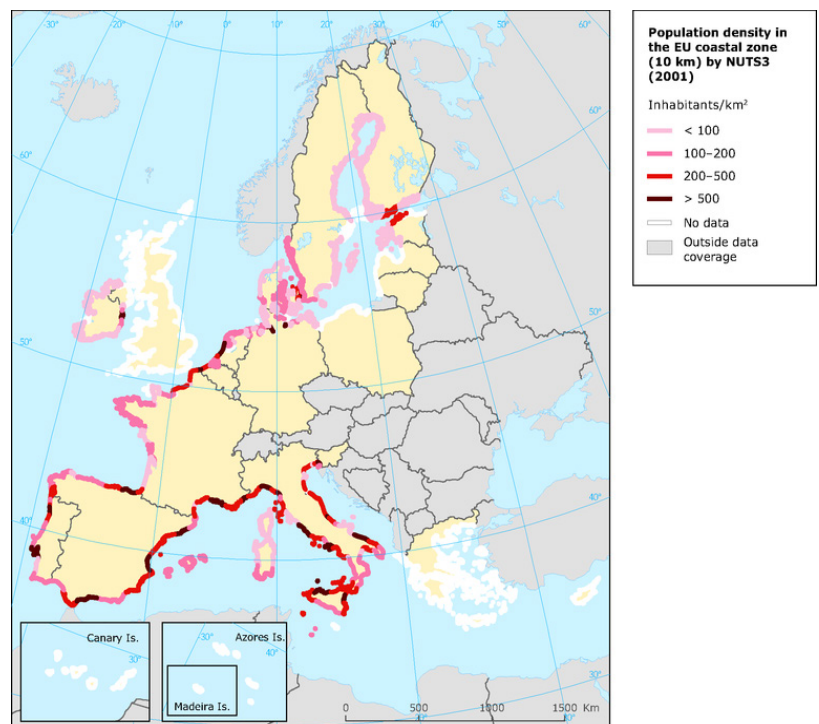


Fig.10 Europe's population density in 10km coastal zone strip (source : ESPON)

The appeal of urban life for rural populations is a phenomenon of society closely linked to the phenomenon of «littoralisation» (Spilanis I., Kizos T., Vaitis M., Koukourouvli N., 2013). Leisure developments, such as marinas and leisure parks as well as secondary homes, hotels and holiday villages demand more and more space and are usually located in the periphery of coastal towns. Those developments have seasonal use and give a lot of pressure on the environment as well as quality of space. Such pressure brings the necessity for more strict planning laws to avoid such pressure especially to small islands where space is limited and such developments can bring irreversible damage.

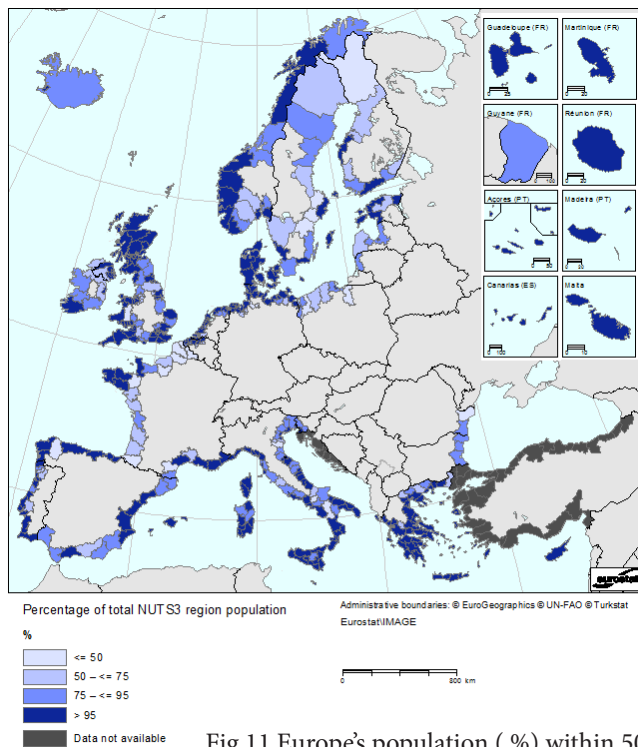


Fig.11 Europe's population ( %) within 50km from the coast map (source : ESPON)

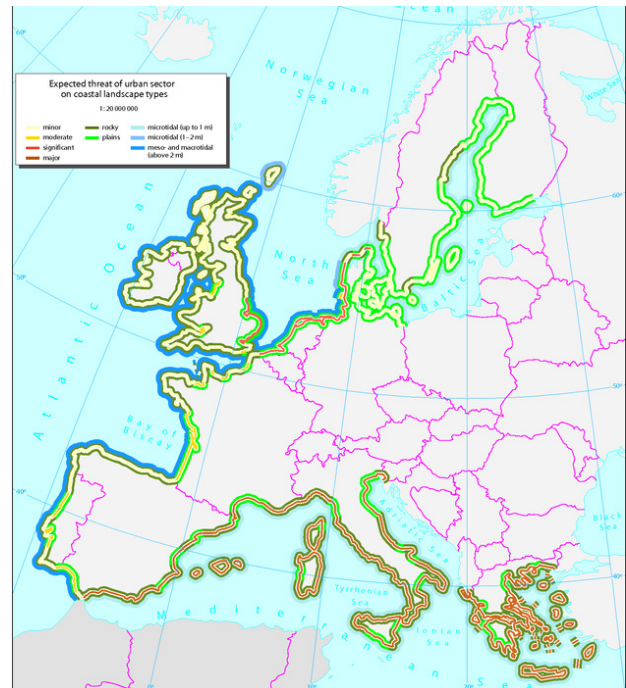


Fig.12 Europe's threat on coastal landscapes map (source : ESPON)

## Importance of Space

The size of the islands is another way to gauge their significance to the EU. Despite having a little surface area (3.4% of the Union's total), they are significant on the marine front since some Member States have large economic exclusive zones because of their varied island holdings.

## Island immigration - sensitive demographics

Island populations move a lot and their demographics show intense signs of instability because their limitation of space leads to limited resources, jobs and forces people to migrate. In the smallest islands, emigration has affected the public services such as schools, doctors and health departments which a lot of them are in danger of closure. In addition the touristic seasonality affects the local population and enhances the conflict between urban and rural areas and who return there from time to time or plan to retire there, between agriculture and tourism, between the needs of visitors and those of the residents. In general those demographic pressures it is essential to control re- capacities and modes, the possibilities of reducing quantities at source and of recycling, the markets for recycled materials and the limitations on waste disposal are further questions linked to the local context.



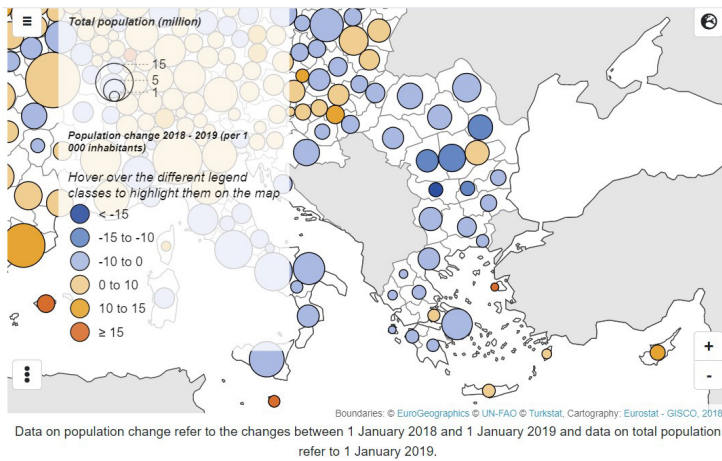
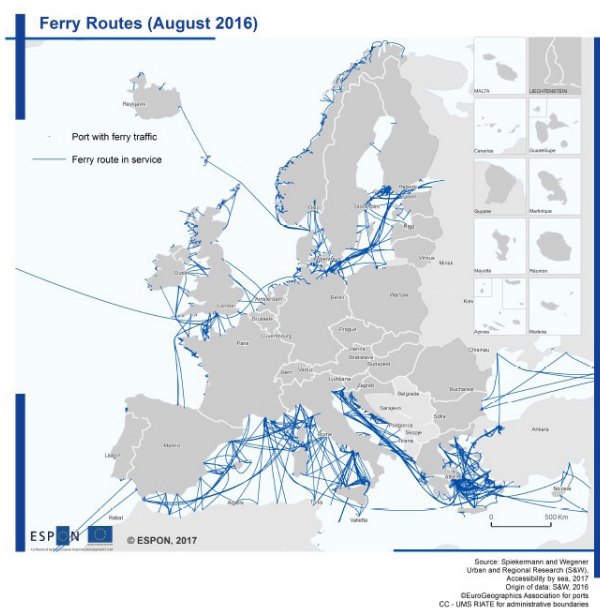


Fig.13 South Europe's population change map 2018-2019 period (source : ESPON)

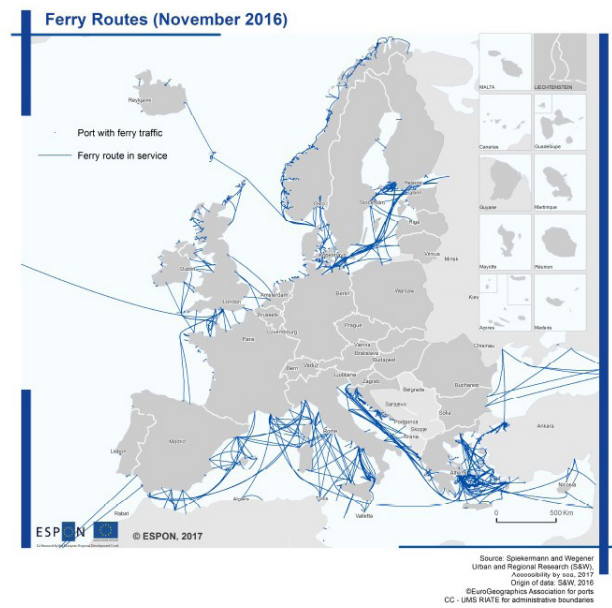
The all-pervasive obstacle of transport

Transport primarily is a choice but the islanders cannot use road or rail to communicate with the outside, which means that they do not benefit between transport nodes that mainland zones have. Beyond that is a matter of frequency and availability, inhabitants of the outermost regions, in most cases, do not enjoy regular passenger transport services as well as have reduced choice by the saturation of the transport modes available during the tourism season which are forced to book well in advanced. Islanders feel segregated and isolated in their own islands as, usually during the high season periods they cannot move out because they have to pre-book away in advance in order to find availability during peak times or they cannot travel during off season periods because the plethora of transport is not operating anymore.



European ferry network, August 2016

Fig.14 European Frerry routes August 2016 map (source : ESPON)



European ferry network, November 2016

Fig.15 European Frerry routes November 2016 map (source : ESPON)

Flow data for European ports is available at EUROSTAT's transport statistics site However, data are limited in their spatial resolution, flow data for ports are to or from ports to countries only. for very few countries also to subsets of the country. That means that the flow matrix generated from that data is a matrix between ports and countries and not between ports and ports. There is no information about port to port between the large six mediterranean islands. ( Spiekermann & Wegener. (2017). From the ferry routes between November and August there are less differences than the one has been expected.

Ferries are an important means of daily transport for the locals but in popular areas in particular also for the visitors. As there are seasonal differences of the ferry services a distinction was made between ferry networks for summer and winter time. EUROSTAT collected data from tour companies, port schedules and internet resources.

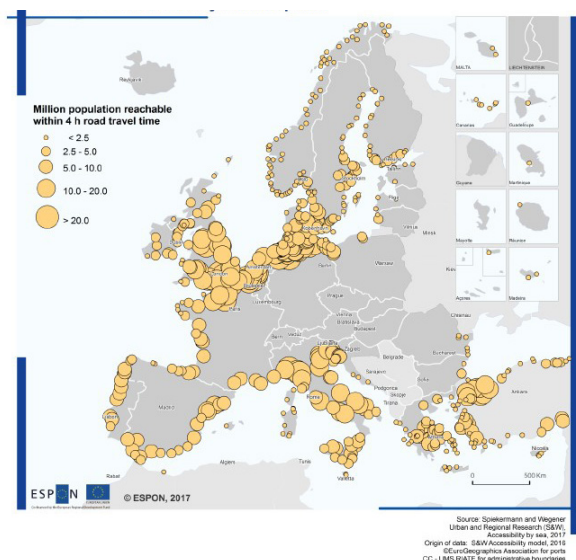


Fig.16 Europe's million of population on reachable within 4 hours road travel time(source : ESPON)

GDP and unemployment: revealing, and misleading, statistics

EU uses mostly the unemployment rate and per-capita GDP as indicators to value the socio-economic level of its territories. Those indicators show the difficult situation of most of the island inhabitants of the Union, but it doesn't not reveal the real situation of the territories. The tool exists, it has already been accepted by the Member States, and everyone calculates it in the same way, thanks to the major standardisation work carried out since the adoption of common European accounting standards.

However, the fact that it is broken down on the basis of NUTS of 1 to 3 zoning leads to significant disparities and distortions depending on the geographic levels. For instance, it discriminates against the smallest regions and is not based on homogeneous territories. - It penalises areas with high levels of migration, state transfers, and private money transfers. The truth is that the GDP is but one regional account indicator among many others, and it is not always the most useful one for gaining insight into a region's economy. The level of consumption both by locals and visitors which show the consumption and spending balance of payments are usually more accurate indicators of economic development.

Lower living standards

The islands quality environmental assets, culture, easy going life and rich heritage can contribute to making the islands more attractive, the same does not apply to the standard of living of these regions, which is generally lower than that of their Mainland. Despite the fact that several islands offer "island bonuses" of different generosity in some fields of activity (particularly the civil service), the majority of revenues are still lower than on the mainland. Tourism and fisheries with their seasonal identity generates a high level of precarious employment, especially in the tourism sector. A per-capita GDP higher than the national average can also conceal lower-than-average salaries. The cost of insularity does not benefit islanders because they have high import costs both on products and people as well as cost on production of goods and services.

### Vulnerable and specialised Economies

Because of the scarcity of their resources, island economies are characterised by a high level of dependency on a select few industries. Even if these essentially singular industries—tourism, fishing, breeding, mining, etc.—can change throughout time, the islands' economies will never be as diversified as those of the majority of mainland areas. On the mainland, the job market in nearby areas can be used to counteract the collapse of one industry, however on an island, any significant crisis in the dominant industry is resolved by unemployment or emigration. For a number of reasons, including the fact that the classic size of an island company tends to be smaller than its mainland counterpart, affecting markets or crises affect island firms more quickly.

Additionally, island businesses must contend with greater costs (mostly related to transportation) and a smaller local market. Due to the lower profit margins that result, they are more vulnerable during recessions because the closure of one or two significant enterprises might have catastrophic consequences. The dominance of certain industries, like tourism, causes a precipitous reduction in traditional activities, especially agriculture, on a number of islands. The environment will be impacted by this predicament.

### An acknowledged environmental heritage

The natural heritage of the islands can be a good and bad thing at the same time. The total absence of industrial activity contributes to the economic weakness and it's a result of the favoured preservation of fauna and flora of the island's environment. This is demonstrated by the significant number of island sites included in the list of regions subject to EU environmental law or by the quantity of sites recognized by UNESCO as belonging to the collective cultural heritage of humanity.

While these qualities can point to a pleasant living environment, be an indicator of prestige, or act as a tourist attraction, they nevertheless acknowledge environmental heritage constraints. In a number of islands, the territory that is subject to national or EU environmental law makes up relatively large percentages of the total area (or even the entire territory in the case of certain small islands). The surface areas that can be used freely for commercial operations or even for human habitat are reduced as a result of the requirements imposed by these classifications, despite the fact that their levels of intensity vary greatly. Because of the limited nature of the island territory, human and nature are forced to share a limited space, a factor that creates, sometimes intense, conflicts of interest between the diverse economic activities such as the opening of a quarry, or the creation of a waste disposal with residents or the law leaning to the defence of the environment, in a context where the alternatives are limited or non-existent. . These conflicts are obviously more acute the smaller the territory available or the higher the population density.

Tourism industry brings money but also creates difficulties both on account of their intensity and their seasonal nature. Seasonal population growth on islands over a relatively short time of the year has long-term effects on the economy and the environment. These include the necessity to accommodate for unexpected shortages of electricity, water: the overuse of sensitive ecosystems or designated sites; pressure on real estate resources, etc. Their intensity can be evaluated by comparing the respective effect of tourist numbers and the residential population, and by measuring their temporary variations according to the climate or topography.

### A unique cultural heritage

The cultural heritage owes its richness and originality to factors like the ones of the environmental heritage. Some of them were geographically situated to become centres of trade between cultures, cities of kingdoms, outposts of empires, or even the mingling places of civilisations at various points in their history when seafaring played a significant role. This heritage can be seen, inter alia, in the architectural heritage.

In several other islands, geographic isolation with a more autonomous economy based on persistence on fisheries or agriculture enabled the preservation of dialects or traditions which are in danger of extinction. The wealth of the linguistic, architectural, and cultural heritage of the island regions actually serves as a tourist attraction. If we restrict ourselves to languages with official status or those taught in schools, it is noteworthy that in 8 of the 21 island regions of the EU, the population speaks a language other than their Member State's native tongue. The islands' growing tourist industry or, in the case of the languages, the media's widespread use both weaken or even put them in danger.

### Complex to manage, territories

If insularity is a limitation, an archipelago indicates an accumulation of problems, with each island standing in for a separate challenge. Twenty-one island regions make up the EU 15, and seventeen of those are archipelagos with numerous populated islands. The archipelagos are extremely fragmented regions, either because of the numerous small, poorly populated islands that make them up or because they are dispersed over geographical areas that span several hundred kilometres, sometimes as much as the territory of a big Member State.

On a daily basis, their residents experience not just isolation but often frequently "dual" or even "triple" isolation. Sometimes, the transportation system is set up in such a way that islanders must travel by boat or aircraft from a small island to a medium island to the regional centre, where they can be bought by the locals or (in cases where it is feasible) fixed linkages between the islands can be built. In hilly islands (like Corsica or Crete), where the population tends to concentrate along the coasts, leaving the interior desolate, this territorial fragmentation assumes a new form. The populations that inhabit the plains are separated from one another by rugged terrain and are unable to share the same infrastructures since the access times are too long. Those territories essentially need to have lots of roads, airports and ports which eventually make them have higher costs. For example Corsica which has less than 300.000 people has four airports and seven ports.

National and local governments are responsible for providing an appropriate level of public service to each community on each island, even the smallest and most distant ones, in order to support the fragile coherence of the archipelago or avoid the entire depopulation of the most vulnerable areas. A port or airport, a school, administrative offices or health services, water or electricity supply, waste management infrastructures, etc. are services which if provided adds to the cost of management in ways that are completely disproportionate to the size of the populations serviced. Furthermore, it is uncommon for economies of scale to be applicable.

As an example to understand the spatial extension of an archipelago compared with a mainland state could be that the Greek islands cover and extend in an area similar to Germany but have a population of 500.000 compared with Germany which have 80 million. Furthermore, Turkey, a third country with whose relations have historically and politically been strained, and with whom there have been numerous border incidents, borders the Aegean islands. In contrast, following the fall of the iron curtain, the reunited Germany has found itself at the centre of a free trade region that stretches from the Atlantic to the Urals.

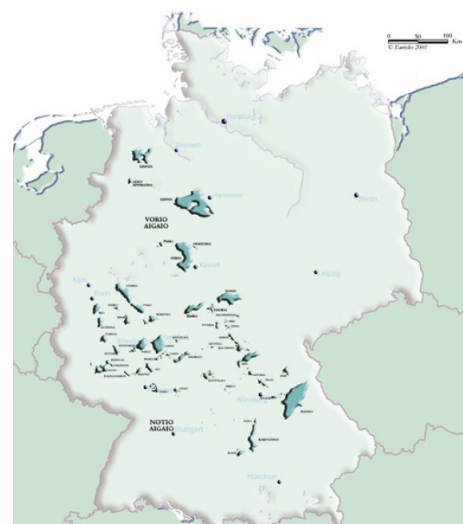


Fig.17 Spatial comparison extension map : Aegean islands vs Germany (source : EURISLS)



### Frequently extreme population profiles

A region's population density is a factor with a variety of effects. For remote islands without a hinterland to provide labour or absorb excess people, low population density is a serious disadvantage. Low or very low population density has the consequence of making infrastructure and services more expensive relative to the authorities. It substantially impairs local enterprises' ability to make a profit, escalating their dependence and requiring them to import the majority of their goods and services from the mainland. This issue also affects the majority of the odd number of small coastal islands scattered throughout the EU that could be considered "micro-insular" places.

Paradoxically, while a high population density solves certain problems, a too high density raises others. Four EU island regions (Martinique, Madeira, Reunion and the Isle of Wight) have a population density close to or over 300 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>. The island of Gozo, in Malta, has a record density of close to 430 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>.

Some single-island regions, such as Corsica, have recently seen their population rise, mainly in towns and dispersed territory. In archipelagos where large islands exist they become poles that attract people from smaller islands. Sardegna or Crete are such examples where the small islands seem to act as "satellite". In these regions, the profile of the "mainland" island is similar to that of non-archipelago islands. The same positive population trend concerning the islands with the high demographics is also seen in regions not so marked by the presence of a dominant island, such as Mallorca, Minorca and Ibiza.

### 1.2e. Islands performance & classification

All Eu islands are divided in three categories based on factors such as Social equity, Population change, Employment rate and economically active population, environmental conservation, Land cover, Biodiversity and Accessibility. ( Spilanis I., Kizos T., Vaitis M., Koukourouvli N., 2013, p. 21)

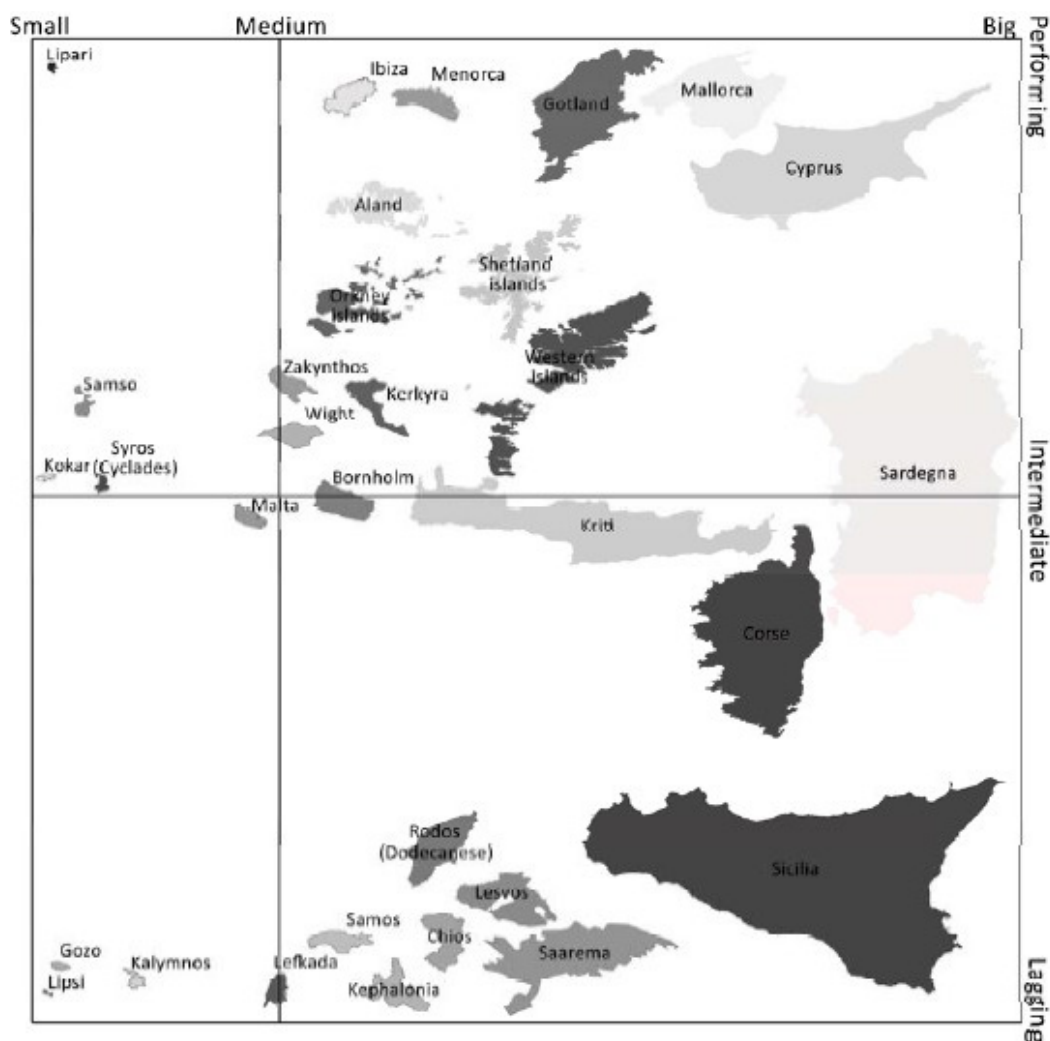


Fig.18 Schematic presentation of EU islands and island regions Map (source : EURISLS)

### Performing islands

Have strong tourism and they get positive economic values but with fragile context. (Illes Balears and Cyprus) or on external factors (Aland with specific fiscal regime, Shetland and Orkney with oil extraction and Gotland on public sector)

### Intermediate islands

10 islands in total with average results, some based on tourism (Zakynthos, Kyklades, Dodekanisa, Kerkyra, Isle of White and Crete) and other with balanced but average performing economy (Malta & Sardegna) and the public sector on Bornholm, Western Isles and Isle of White.

### Lagging islands

Have low attractiveness and low economic performance (Chios, Levis, Samos, Kefalonia, Lefkada, Gozo, Corsica and Sicily)

From the above matrix The six largest islands of the Mediterranean cover all broad of performance based on the above factors. classification. The six largest Mediterranean islands are all classified as single NUTS 2 regions with NUTS 3 subdivisions. Mallorca and Cyprus are the only ones which are both single NUTS 2 & NUTS 3, then follow Corsica with two NUTS 3 areas, Crete with four NUTS 3, Sardegna with five NUTS 3 and Sicily being the largest Mediterranean island with nine NUTS 3 areas. Spilanis I., Kizos T., Vaitis M., Koukourouvli N., 2013. p.5)



Fig.19 Size comparison map between of the six largest islands of the Mediterranean  
(source : made by the author on mapfight website)

All six islands have diverse sovereign identities, with Cyprus being the only being both island sovereign state and of its territory under Turkish occupation. Sardegna, Sicily and Mallorca are all administrative regions with certain autonomy from the states they belong to, with Corsica being a territorial collectivity of France, while Crete maintains a classic regional status like all other regions of Greece.

## 1.3 THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN COHESION POLICY 2021-2027

### 1.3a. Policy

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the unique situation of islands in 2016. The resolution emphasised the potential of the insular territories of the European Union to strengthen the sustainable development of the Union and called for, among other things, clear definitions of insular challenges and of the actions to be taken.

Mediterranean islands are administered from their central government depending on various factors such as size, population demographics, their natural resources and their political framework. Some have certain independence from central governments while others do not. (Haase D., Maier A. 2021) The political and administrative relations of the Mediterranean Islands with each other and with the states they belong to and the EU are complicated. All these cultural, geopolitical and administrative layers, both historical and recent, have shaped their distinct landscapes.

Mainland states usually have the power to take decisions upon these islands in coordination with their regional governments and councils. so Eu in reality has little influence upon taking any direct decisions upon them. The same applies to policy formulation with islands being distant from this process, unless they are island states. Policy formulation usually takes place at the National and European level and is inevitably influenced by events on a larger geopolitical scale such as regional, e.g. Mediterranean or global. This is sometimes considered a uni-directional process. Island states such as Cyprus benefit on both being an island and nation by using knowledge and fundings both as members of UN small Developing states initiative and from the EU. (Hopkins, D. 2002)

Some of the Mediterranean states have distinctive policies and departments dedicated to their islands. For example, Greece has a ministry for the Aegean and is responsible for the three island regions of: northern Aegean (7 islands), southern Aegean (50 inhabited islands), Ionian (13 islands) while Crete is a separate administrative region. Currently France is the only country within Europe with no representation of its islands or specific status for Corsica which is still a political controversy. (Vogiatzakis I. N., Th. Papayannis Th., Mannion A.M. 9 2008) Another organisation that comprises EU islands is the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (C.P.M.R.) an independent body set-up to tackle the disadvantages of the EU's periphery. Within this organisation the Island Commission is working specifically on EU islands related issues.

Interreg Euro-MED Programme is a European territorial cooperation programme which stretches from one side of the Mediterranean to the other, Giblartar to the Levant sea and the Balkans. It covers a whopping 15.000km of coastline of a very diverse morphological and cultural territory consisting of various parchilegos and large islands. (Interreg Euro-MED 2021/27 Programme. 2021)

The main joint challenges are economic and social disparities, territorial fragmentation and the need for joint investment that can create dynamics between the islands which will enhance their fragile economies and promote innovation. Aims to identify as priorities in the fields of innovation, economy, environment through multicultural and multi-stakeholder (public and private) partnerships within projects whose main target will be the needs of the territories and populations of the Mediterranean, promote joint reflection and thus strengthen the cohesion of our European area.

Today, the Mediterranean is an interfacing zone at the heart of major challenges for the entire planet: its centrality makes it a laboratory for the study of the phenomena of complexity, crisis and resilience.

In several areas of the EU, the 2008 crisis had a considerable impact and turned back the long-term trend of decreasing regional differences. It caused a drop in GDP per capita between 2009 and 2015 in almost 40% of regions, primarily in Ireland, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece. Regional gaps widened during this time, but beginning in 2015, they began to close again until 2020, when the Covid-19 Pandemic struck the world and severely stressed the EU labour markets. Tourism is one industry where the pandemic's effects are still being felt deeply, which suggests that countries that depend heavily on tourism are more badly affected and may take longer to fully recover. (ESPON Programme. 2013)

In general, the "poorer" regions can be classified into two different categories: post-industrial regions that have lost their historic industrial base, in part because of the effects of globalisation, and sparsely populated rural areas marked by population ageing and net emigration.

The importance of climate change, which has diverse effects on various European biogeographical regions, was also noted by the EU in the Epsom study. Environmental changes like droughts, heat waves, flash floods, and coastal floods, as well as a number of ecological alterations, have been seen as consequences. Climate change in the Mediterranean has an impact on every region bordering the basin and a great distance beyond, making it the most important and unifying issue for any decision-maker.

As stressed by Neighbourhood Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi during a speech at the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Forum on Trade and Investment on 12 November 2020, it would be very important that both coasts of the Mediterranean, North and South to remain united and perform resilience regarding the recovery of Covid-19.

As in the 2021 European week for Regions and cities conference in Brussels the president of the conference said that Covid-19 pandemic brought to the world an island-like experience, highlighting more than ever the need of self-sufficiency, flexibility, sustainability and resilience. The world came closer to feel like how it is to live in insular communities like the ones of the islands.



Fig.20 Size comparison map between the Mediterranean and Europe  
(source : made by the author on mapfight website)



## 1.4 RETURN TO THE COUNTRYSIDE? - NATIONAL POLICIES

### 1.4a. The divide debate - The impact of Covid-19 on rural/urban balance

The Covid-19 pandemic have impacted the rural/urban balance and have adjusted for many their lifestyle. Living close to nature has become a choice for lots of people and many more are considering doing so. According to the article “ The divide between the rural and the urban world “for the bank of Spain (Sevilla J. 2021), the country in 2019 was still at the back of the queue in the EU in the implementation of remote working. The 2020 year have changed this scenario and reported that more than 3,000,000 occupied people in Spain worked remotely on a habitual basis. This volume is higher by 216% than the number registered in 2019. Similar reports showed this phenomenon was also taking place in other Eu countries such as Italy, France and the United Kingdom. Organisations and employees had to adjust quickly into this new lifestyle which was not established in the society, which now seems like it is beneficial both for companies by reducing costs and demand on physical space plus for employees which can have better work/life balance.

Another influential figure on the architecture and urbanism world, Rem Koolhaas, at the exhibition in Guggenheim museum in New York in 2020, after years of research he put on the table the question if the future of humanity is in the Countryside. ( Koolhaas R. 2020). He dictates that why 50% of the global population ( according to a UN report) is living in cities which occupy only 2% of Earth's surface, while the remaining 98% have endless possibilities? A report on El Diario de Burgos in March 2021 showed that different councils in rural Spain tackling the renovation of houses due to greater demand, like 29 villages in Ribera del Duero. During the crisis the choice to go to the countryside has increased by 30%. It is not clear if yet that is Phainomenon that will be established or just a trend.

On the other hand, according to the European Commission report in 2022, 1200 municipalities in the EU are marked by multiple attributes of lonely places, such as depopulation, poor access to services, slow internet connection. The problem is present across the EU. Indeed, many countries came up with different names for such less-fortunate areas: “España vaciada” in Spain, “Aree interne” in Italy, or “Udkantsdanmark” in Denmark, to name just a few.

These territories lag behind in terms of economic performance and are designated as lonely places mostly due to low demographics and weak sociological points of view. The highest intensity of territorial loneliness is in South Europe and the Balkans, while Greece and Spain are the countries with the highest number of lonely places.

The Cohesion Policy for 2021-2027 includes the objective to draw up tailor-made, bottom-up strategies for fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories. The JRC is currently working together with Directorate-General REGIO on a handbook for integrated strategies in non-urban areas, which will complement the Handbook of Sustainable Urban Development Strategies published in 2020. Some National policies follow that directive such as the ones explained below.

## 1.4b. Italy

Although Italy can be considered a strongly urbanised country, rural areas represent a large part of the national territory. Population ageing is a national trend, and the concentration of inhabitants aged over 65 years in rural regions, which is increasing over time, has raised the demand for health care services.



Fig.21 Population distribution % of Italy between Cities, Towns and Rural areas (source Smarta Project 2022)

In the Italian context, the emerged debate has placed greater attention on inner areas, which, since 2014, are the focus of a national policy representing one of the most interesting laboratories and examples of the EU's territorial cohesion goal :

The National Strategy for Inner Area (SNAI).

The SNAI focuses on peripheral areas, meant as regions that have been isolated from the preeminent urban Centred growth models throughout recent decades, much like the cohesion strategies in other European nations. This strategy has demonstrated its potential in administrative, social innovation, and territorial transformation. Its goal was to address the ongoing marginalisation and depopulation trends impacting Italian inner districts. Its critical contribution to tackling the new concerns brought on by the pandemic and fostering a successful shift toward sustainable development in planning issues is therefore generally acknowledged. ( Lucatelli S. 2013)It aims at tackling the negative demographic trends in some Italian marginal areas by promoting actions for local development and the rebalancing of welfare services.

Inner areas are defined based on :

Significantly distant from the main centres offering essential welfare services (education, healthcare, and mobility)

Endowed with significant environmental resources (water resources, agricultural systems, natural and human-made environment) and cultural resources (historical villages, craft centres) A diversified territory as a result of the different natural systems' dynamics and human activity.

Technical Committee for Inner Areas divides the territory into five zones:

Centres / Peri-urban areas / intermediate areas / Peripheral areas, / Ultra-peripheral areas

This division rests on an accessibility indicator ,measured in minutes needed to reach the closest centre

According to this classification, inner areas include all the areas resulting as intermediate, peripheral, and ultra-peripheral which comprises of 60% of Italy land, 20% of population and has around 4000 municipalities.

SNAI Indicator Grid's structure. Indeed, it is articulated in nine sections: Main characteristics;

Demography;

Agriculture and sectoral specialization / Digital divide /

Cultural heritage and tourism / Health /

Accessibility / School / Cooperation among municipalities.

( Rossitti M. , Marta Dell'Ovo M., Oppio A., Torrieri F. 2021)

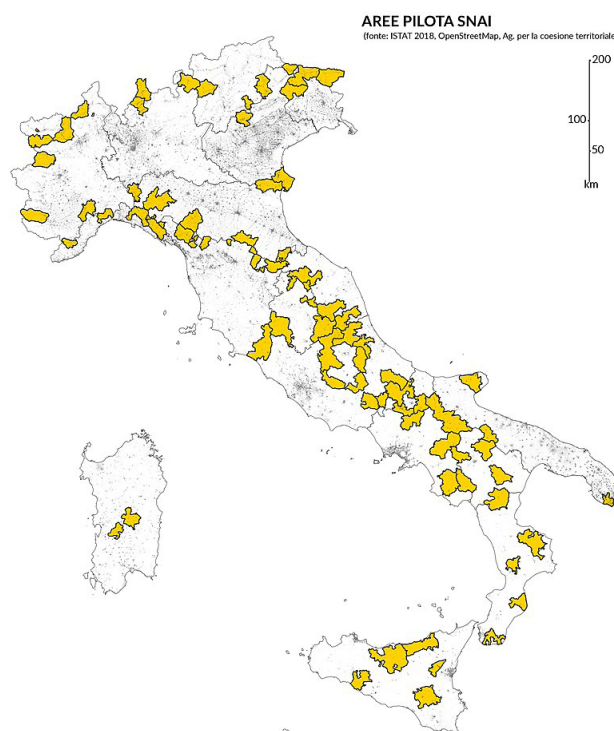


Fig.22 National strategy for inner areas map ( SNAI) (source : [www.agenziacoesione.gov.it](http://www.agenziacoesione.gov.it) 2022)

### 1.4c. Cyprus

Despite its compact size, Cyprus has many quite extensive rural areas of low population density, especially in the centre and the west/north-west of the island. These are characterised by villages and small settlements, without nearby large towns that provide a wide range of business, shopping, social and other services.



Fig.23 Population distribution % of Cyprus between Cities, Towns and Rural areas (source Smarta Project 2022)

### 1.4d. France

Since 2003 France has reformed its administrative architecture and became a decentralised republic. and according to the “principle of subsidiarity”, local councils and regions are intended to show that are competitive and that can best be implemented at the level of their jurisdiction. Therefore does not have a universal regional development strategy. It territoriales its public policies through state-region contracts over seven-year cycles.



Fig.24 Population distribution % of France between Cities, Towns and Rural areas (source Smarta Project 2022)

Territorial reforms reduced from 22 to 13 its regions. In addition, the 22 largest urban areas have the status of “metropolis”, with distinct competencies. The government has implemented the State-Metropolises Pact which aims to give more independence to the metropolitan regions to enhance connection between cities and their hinterlands. 222 cities in all regions will benefit from a five-year revitalisation agreement to revitalise their city centre. This is part of the Town Centre Plan (Action coeur de ville), which aims to improve living standards in cities and promote their connection with the countryside. 124 “industrial territories” will benefit from state support to accelerate the development of their industrial potential., 485 contracts for rural development were agreed in 2016 in order to promote economic attraction, social cohesion, improving infrastructure, digitalisation of the territory and generally revitalise rural areas.

Regional Development Policy in France focused mainly on regeneration of poor areas in the cities of all sizes and enhancement of economic and social development.. (Oliveau S., Doignon Y. 2022)These are annexed to state-region contracts and mainly passed between the state and the agglomerations, which allows pooling the actions of different communes. Development in the countryside, as well as that of small and medium towns, are also the focus of important programmes, including specific contracts on rebirth and development in the face of universal trends.

The General Commission for Territorial Equality (CGET) is a centre-of-government, long-term planning unit under the authority of the Minister of Territorial Cohesion and Relations with Local Authorities. At national level the central power creates collaboration with specific sectors for example the Industrial territories programme which aims to regenerate and deal with industrial zones by supporting employment and promoting competitive and innovative solutions on an international level. (Regional Outlook Report in France 2019). At the regional level, each region develops a regional plan for spatial planning, sustainable development and territorial equality (SRADDET). Each region's job is to designate and reveal its weaknesses and strengths, evaluate them and produce an environmental regional plan for economic development and innovation. The collaboration between National and regional administration is essential and is based on exchange of informations in order to accommodate the specific funds and strategies.

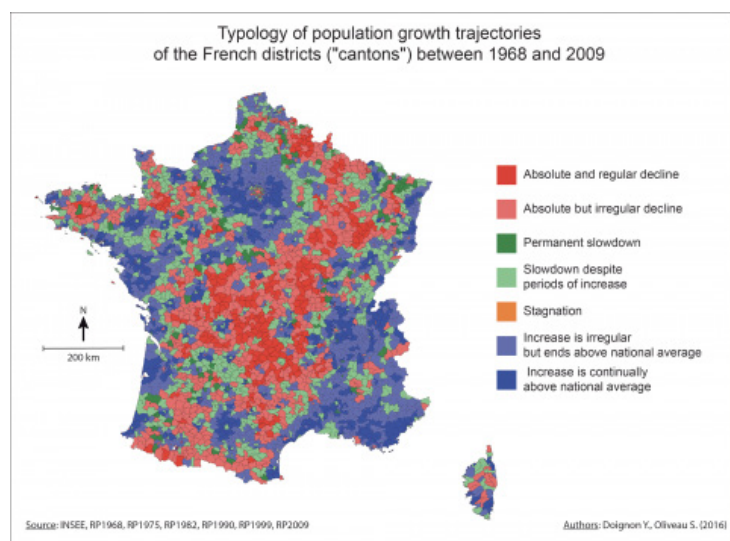


Fig.25 Population growth trajectories in France between 1968-2009 (source : INSE 2016)

At the national level, the government has developed new institutions and policies contributing to the development of rural areas and smart communities, such as:

Study (2017) entitled 'From smart cities to smart territories' commissioned by the French parliament to assess the implementation of smart cities, formalising the conditions to develop smart cities and territories.

Creation of a Digital Agency (governmental administration) in 2015, whose mission is to support actions in the field of innovation and digital development, including supporting high-speed internet for the whole country, inclusive digital society and growth of French start-ups. The Agency created the 'digital pass' (pass numérique), enabling people to receive digital training in order to reduce the digital divide.

A 'Rural Agenda' with 200 propositions for rural development, including topics linked to Smart Villages.

Creation of 'Maison France Service' (French Service Centres) for gathering public services in both rural and urban districts in each canton in France.

The 'Action Coeur de Ville' national programme aims at supporting medium-sized towns in the revitalisation of their centres.

Following a study published by the Association 'France Tiers-Lieux' ('French Third Place'), the government opened a budget of EUR 130 million dedicated to the creation of 300 'territory factories' among which 150 are in non-urban areas.

'New places, new links' is an inter-ministerial programme which provides access to new activities and new services for residents throughout rural areas and in small towns.

'Small towns of tomorrow' works to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants of small towns and surrounding areas by supporting communities in dynamic and environmentally friendly trajectories. The objective of the programme is to strengthen the means of elected representatives of municipalities with fewer than 20 000 inhabitants, exercising centrality functions to build and concretise the means to materialise their territorial projects, throughout their terms in office and up to 2026. (<https://www.smartrural21.eu/countries/france/>)



The CAP ( Common Agricultural Policy) national debate, called ‘ImPACtons’, was launched on 24 February 2020, involving citizens in the definition of the CAP Strategic Plan. The debate was organised on the basis of questions, such as: ‘What do I eat?’, ‘What agricultural models do you want in France?’, ‘Which agro-ecological transition do you prefer for agriculture?’, ‘How to co-exist in rural areas?’, ‘Who to decide the agricultural policy?’ The whole mission was also funded by the EU LEADER programme giving financial support to smart village initiatives. Among others, LEADER supported initiatives such as digital capacity building for local business, rural high school for digital transition, digital open platform for disseminating farming innovations, collaborative project on co-working spaces.

#### 1.4e. Greece

In territorial terms, Greece is widely a rural country: 66.0% of the territory is classed as predominantly rural regions and 28.3% as intermediate regions. Rural depopulation has been one of the most important issues of the latest period for Greece. In about 10 years, the share of people living in rural areas has decreased significantly. (National Rural Network (2020)



Fig.26 Population distribution % of Greece between Cities, Towns and Rural areas (source Smarta Project 2022)

The “Next Generation National Broadband Access Plan” in Greece aims to modernise and expand the internet network of the country, by adopting high speed internet in all its territory and the disperse islands. The NRN ( National Rural Network) in Greece has a strong interest on working on the smart village topic but has no specific activities related to smart villages yet. (Anastasiou E. (2020)

#### 3 projects - Rural Broadband

##### LOTS

Each LOT was assigned to one SPV:

**LOT1:** Macedonia, North Aegean  
([www.oteruralnorth.gr](http://www.oteruralnorth.gr))

**LOT2:** Central Greece, Thessaly, Epirus, Cyclades  
([www.ruralconnect.gr](http://www.ruralconnect.gr))

**LOT3:** Peloponnese, Crete, Ionian, Dodecanese  
(<https://www.oteruralsouth.gr>)

LOT	Residents	Villages / Settlements
1	170,884	1,188
2	185,043	1,864
3	169,360	2,025
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>525,287</b>	<b>5,077</b>



#ficompass



Fig.27 Rural Broadband of Greece map(source : fi-compass.eu)

In Greece, smart villages are still not in valuable consideration for the repopulation and development of the countryside. ( Anastasiou E., Manika S. , Ragazou K., Katsios I. (2021). The first coordinated effort to develop planning strategies for smart villages is presented in the framework of the “Preparatory Action on Smart Rural Areas in the 21st Century” and concerns the island of Kythera.

## 1.4f. Spain

Due to a significant depopulation of rural territories over the recent years, in 2017 only 26,1% of the total population lived in rural areas, despite these covering a large part of Spain. Rural areas, clearly dominated by agricultural activities, face challenges like poor accessibility and connectivity, ageing population, and limited financial capacity of farmers and agri-food companies.



Fig.28 Population distribution % of Spain between Cities, Towns and Rural areas (source Smarta Project 2022)

Spain after the 1950's experienced a huge trend of population moving into big cities so, 46% of its territory lost almost half of its population, a new survey by Spanish think tank Funcas revealed. EURACTIV's partner EFE reports. This heavy loss of population badly hit 23 Spanish provinces in the so-called "depopulated Spain" known as the "España vaciada", which consists of mostly rural areas but also medium-sized cities. The most notorious background incident in the fight to vindicate the rural world dates back to 1999, with the constitution of the citizens' platform Teruel Existe.

La España vacía, by Sergio del Molino. (Sergio Molino S. 2013.) The strength of the movement against the depopulation of rural areas is such that in January 2017, the Conference of Presidents approved the drafting of the National Strategy against the Demographic Challenge. The depopulation problem is particularly mostly the internal provinces of Spain such as Castilla and Leon, three regions in the community of Aragón, two in Extremadura, four in Castilla-La Mancha (Albacete, Ciudad Real, Cuenca, Guadalajara), two in Galicia (Lugo and Ourense), two in the community of Andalusia (Córdoba and Jaén) and La Rioja. There are 3 types of depopulation : , including one that decreases, stagnates, or increases.

The Spanish government will spend €10 billion of the total EU 'post-COVID-19' recovery funds to fight rural depopulation. (Rodríguez R. D., Remedios Larrubia Vargas L. R. 2022).The government wants to help the country's most depopulated areas, such as Castilla y León or Aragón, and boost their economic contribution to the Spanish GDP, currently at 30%, improving conditions of those areas of the so-called "España vaciada" (emptied rural Spain).

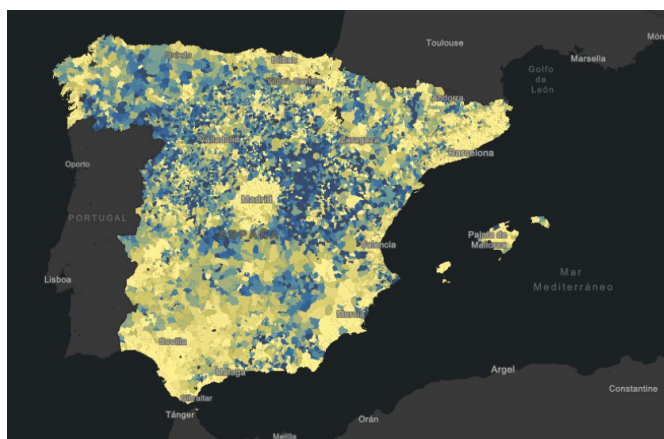
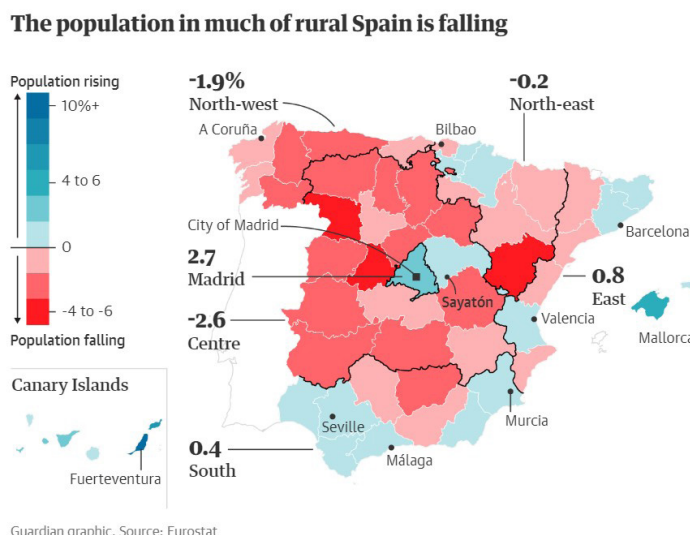


Fig.29 Population decline map of Spain (source: ethic.es)



Guardian graphic. Source: Eurostat

Fig.30 Population decline % map per region of Spain (source: eurostat)

The target is to promote a smooth ecological transition for rural areas, restoration and energy classification and improvement of public and private buildings, energy pilot sustainable projects and renovation and expansion of water systems as well digitising the territory. Digital and professional training plans will be promoted in 3,000 municipalities; the administration will come closer to the locals of these towns, and actively engage them with the public services will be strengthened through digital channels, the plan states. There are more than 130 measures that the Spanish central power approved in 2021 which all come along with the initiatives dictated from the Agenda 2030 of Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations such as sustainable tourism, digital innovation, public services decentralisation and equal right opportunities.

## 1.5 PILOT PROJECTS - REPOPULATING THE COUNTRYSIDE

According to UN (UN. Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division 2019) half of all humankind lived in cities and there is a provision that within the next 50 years 75% of the population will live in the cities. As only 2% of the earth surface is covered by cities, what about the other 98%, the countryside. According to the OMA and Rem Koolhaas exhibition and report back in 2020 in the Guggenheim museum that might not be the case. He dictated that possible radical changes might take in the countryside, in remote areas and wild zones. Those zones occupy 98% of the surface of the earth while only 2% is occupied by cities. The content of the exhibition is years of work of collaborators representing diverse global geographies and large expertise.(Koolhaas R. 2020)

The Future' is that our current form of urban life has promoted the digitisation and automation of the countryside on a huge scale. Data storage, fulfilment centres, genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, robotic automation, economic innovation, worker migration, and the private purchase of land for ecological preservation are in many cases more actively explored and experimented with in the countryside than the city. ( Rem Koolhaas).



Way beyond this exhibition there are various initiatives that have explored and aimed the repopulation of the countryside in order to tackle population ageing, immigration problems, sociopolitical trends and sustainability issues.

Fig.31 Repopulation initiative case studies map ( source : made by the author)

### REPOPULATION INITIATIVE TYPOLOGIES



SOLANELL

ONE MAN-  
Led initiative

Fig.32 Solanell aerial map  
( source : google earth)



ARVIEU

PRIVATE COMPANY  
Led initiative

Fig.33 Arviu aerial map  
( source : google earth)



PUNTA DO SOL

GOVERNMENT  
Led initiative

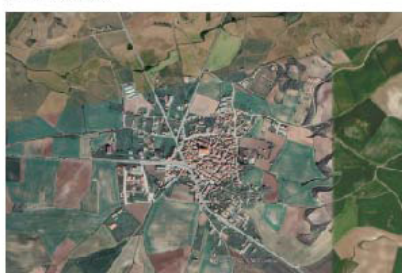
Fig.34 Punta do sol  
aerial map  
( source : google earth)



COZZANO

SUSTAINABILITY  
Led initiative

Fig.35 Cozzano aerial map  
( source : google earth)



VILLAHOZ

START-UP  
Led initiative

Fig.36 Villahoz  
aerial map  
( source : google



STILE & RIACE

REFUGEE  
Led initiative

Fig.37 Stile & Riace aerial  
map  
( source : google earth)



### 1.5a. SOLANELL

The project “Reviu Solanell ” aimed to revitalise an abandoned village in the municipality of Montferrer i Castellbò, in the Spanish Pyrenees. The Project was an idea of local architect Saul Garreta which 10 years ago started buying abandoned houses for returning inhabitants. He managed to connect both water and electric power to the houses and internet as well. The model developed is a cooperative management that ensures participation of the inhabitants. It proves their jobs and neighbourhood connections. A model developed by the chair of housing at the Rovira i Virgili University is followed with the aim to regain economic activities in the areas and there with population (<https://www.reviuresolanell.org/> ).The model is based on cohousing where people share property and pay a variable fee based on the period they spend in the town, so no loan or rent is charged.. The aim is to rebuild 30 houses hosting about 150 people. “We want to create an efficient model and begin to build more dwellings than initially foreseen” said the architect.  
(A Guide To Sustainable Urbanisation and Land Use. 2020)



Fig.38 Solanell building reconstruction  
( source : pandora hub)



Fig.39 Solanell communal living areas  
( source : pandora hub)



Fig.40 Solanell communal living areas  
( source : pandora hub)

### 1.5b. VILLAHOZ

StartUpVillage Villahoz was established in 2019 - a small town of almost 300 inhabitants, was inaugurated as a workspace and incubation of projects. The town was visited on several occasions in order to identify several strengths and opportunities were identified for the municipality. The village hosted the European Congress of Rural Repopulation where more than 400 people attended from large institutions: European Union, 4 Ministries, 14 Autonomous Communities, more than 60 mayors; in addition to large companies (Telefónica, REE, Acciona, Tragsa, Pascual), associations and foundations. ( European Network for Rural Development. 2021) It has a great impact on the media: TV: LaSexta and RTVE, 4m. viewers, as well as radio, digital media, press and social networks.



Fig.41 Villahoz activities map ( source : startupvillage villahoz.eu)



Fig.42 Villahoz village view & surroundings ( source : startupvillage villahoz.eu)

The work was focused on the entrepreneurial Ecosystem of the town and identifying the Public-Private Ecosystem to apply Open Innovation then the project scaled up the initiative to Lerma (the head of subregion with 10,000 inhabitants) and established a Technical Office for Resilience and Innovation (OTRI) for pin pon and create inter-territorial projects within the Next Generation EU (NGEU) fund. At the moment it is developing 5 projects at national level, which aim to create digital platforms that tackle depopulation in the countryside and manage better information about tourism and business in the territory.(<https://startupvillagevillahoz.eu/>).



### 1.5c. COZZANO

South Corsica's high valley of Taravo is home to the municipality of Cozzano, which has 270 residents. Twenty years ago, the hamlet made investments in sustainable production to start its energy shift. Local governments hope to hasten the transition of the village by utilising digital technologies to support energy sustainability through the Smart Village idea. Cozzano wants to develop into a positive-energy community that generates twice as much energy as it uses. The town of Cozzano joined the Smart Paesi project, which translates to "Smart Village" in Corsican, in order to continue its work in sustainable development. Through the use of digital tools, this neighbourhood project seeks to hasten Cozzano's transformation by utilising the sustainable energy generation that is currently in place. The partners of Smart Paesi aspire to improve the community's climate and energy resilience through the use of connected devices and the collection of environmental data. (<https://www.euromontana.org/>).

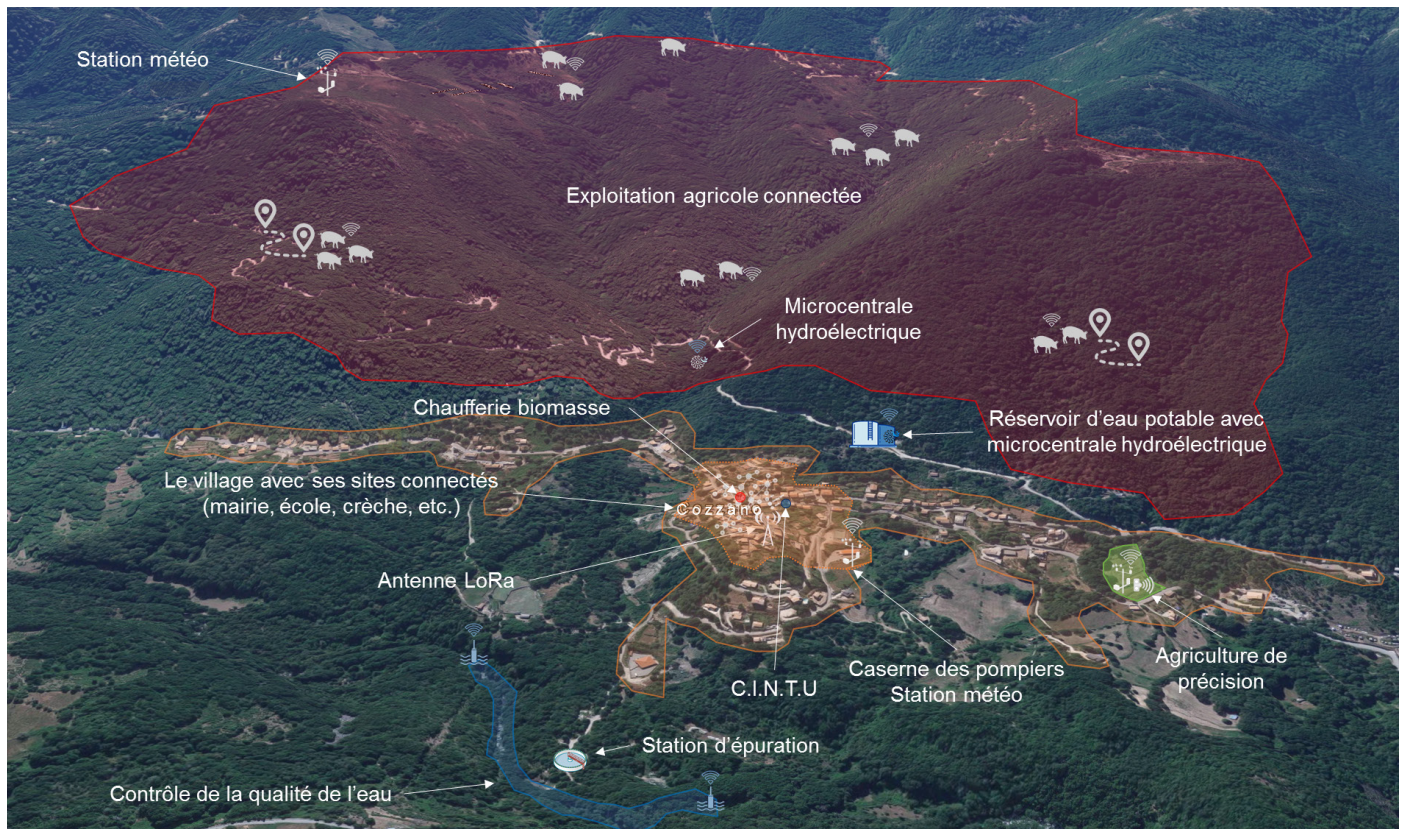


Fig.43 Cozzano sustainability resources map ( source : smart paesi)



Fig.44 Cozzano village & surroundings ( source : smart paesi)

The village of Cozzano is a great example on how sustainable development and good management can be part of engaging policies in local administration.. The municipality has succeeded in developing green energy using the natural resources of the village and achieving high participation of the locals and using sustainable tools that are helping the resilience of the forests and agriculture areas around the village.



### 1.5d. PUNTA DO SOL

The village of Ponta do Sol is spread over 43km and is home to 8200 people.

On the tiny, volcanic island of Madeira, one of Portugal's two autonomous regions, the first European community for digital nomads opened in February 2021. The nomad village, which is located on the island's south coast, gives remote employees free access to a Slack community, a desk and chair in the John do Passos Cultural Centre, and free wifi from 8 am to 10 pm every day. ( <https://digitalnomads.startupmadeira.eu/>)

The regional Government of Madeira has created and financed that project in order to attract digital nomads from around the world. So far it has achieved success as more than 3000 people have applied. The village can host 100 people initially but is expected that overall that will benefit the entire island as more and more people are willing to stay for longer periods of time, building a community and reduce the season trend of those island. The project has also teamed up with local businesses such as real estate, hotels and rental car companies for the nomads to use.



Fig.45 Ponta do sol village view and surroundings  
( source : [digitalnomads.startupmadeira.eu](https://digitalnomads.startupmadeira.eu/))



Fig.46 & 47 Ponta do sol digital nomads co-working spaces  
( source : [digitalnomads.startupmadeira.eu](https://digitalnomads.startupmadeira.eu/))



### 1.5e. ARVIEU

“Le Jardin d’Arvieu” is the result of the dynamic created by the cooperative Laëtis since its installation in Arvieu, in 1998. As the village and the company were suffering from isolation and depopulation, Laëtis and its founders started to think about how to make Arvieu a digital and attractive village.

In the settlement, the Laëtis cooperative was founded in 1998 with a focus on digital and website development. Laëtis was made up of 3 employees at that time and was given two years of free housing in a building in the hamlet by the municipality and suggested to the municipality that a position be created for establishing cultural initiatives in the village and bringing new activities to the area in response to the lack of options in the community.

From this concept, the municipality decided to work with Laëtis to open a media library and a cyber-base in 2007 to improve the village’s connectivity. In the same buildings as the future third place, the “Cantou,” a location aggregating public services (the post office, cultural, and digital services), was established. The “Loco-Motivés” platform was created in 2012 as a result of the municipality’s internet growth and the vision of Laëtis founder. It attempts to assist locals in getting food delivered via the internet to their town. While all these initiatives contributed to the village development, the municipality started in 2014 a territorial diagnosis with the participation of citizens. The diagnosis results were shared with the inhabitants during public meetings and helped to define important issues for the community. (<https://www.smartrural21.eu>)

Citizen’s participation as well as the collaboration between the municipality and Laëtis led to the idea of developing a third place including coworking rooms, training, and an art exhibition to revitalise the village. In 2018, from all these achievements, Laëtis and the municipality chose to promote their initiatives in the region and the county and to disseminate their model. The communautés de communes (federation of municipalities), convinced by the project, chose to finance the renovation of the co-working building, under its investment in economic development.



Fig.48 Arview village view and surroundings  
( source : leparisien.fr)



Fig.49 & 50 Château Arvieu co-working spaces  
( source : laponia.fr/chateauarvieu)

Through this process, the model of Arvieu led to the formalization of a “Digital Activity Area” (“Zone d’Activité Numérique” which is a label created by Arvieu) with all the activities mentioned hosted in the village’ ancient convent.

In 2017, Arvieu was awarded the “Smart Village Ruralitic” title and in 2020, as Arvieu became well-known in France, the village welcomed a new project. Thanks to the investment of Laëtis, a group of young persons engaged in the green transition settled in an old castle of Arvieu named “le Domaine de Montfranc” and set up a place to train people on environmental and social transition but also to welcome new inhabitants in the area.

### 1.5f. STILE & RIACE

Calabria experienced waves of emigration, just as many other declining, rural areas of Europe. Calabria continues to be an underdeveloped region with high unemployment and an ageing population because of poverty, a corrupt governmental system, and the historical dominance of the 'Ndrangheta mafia, which encourages the emigration crisis to persist today. The famous Riace model of repopulating abandoned villages started back in 1998, when 300 Kurdish refugees arrived, years before the refugee problems in Europe. The Kurdish immigrants spontaneously received assistance from neighbourhood volunteers in the absence of a formal national reception system for refugees, which wasn't established until years later. A year after this initial boat arrived, a group of young residents led by Domenico Lucano, who would eventually be elected mayor of Riace, established the non-profit organisation Città Futura Puglisi. (<https://ec.europa.eu>) They created the so-called "Riace model," which integrated the welcome of migrants with the revitalization of the neighbourhood, in collaboration with the municipality. Local Italians and refugees jointly launched a number of projects, including the 'laboratori' (workshops) to revive traditional local crafts, the sustainable agricultural projects, and the renovation of the old town.



Fig.51 Riace communal activities  
( source : Nicola Zolin photo)

Fig.52 Riace village & surroundings  
( source : Nicola Zolin photo)



The Riace case received significant international media interest, resulting in movies, documentaries, and academic articles. In 2016, mayor Lucano was even named one of the world's 50 greatest leaders by Fortune magazine. The Riace model was also imitated by numerous other cities, and it served as the impetus for the establishment of a national system that provided funding for similar efforts. In this context, the Riace-model is exceptional, as it demonstrated that the reception of refugees could turn the tide for a dying town. In only a few years, the local school reopened. Businesses flourished again thanks to refugees who were both customers and employees. The population even grew again from about 1.600 in 2001 to over 2.300 in 2016. In this period, on average, about 400 to 500 refugees resided in Riace. The rest of the population growth was because the new young generation was able to stay in Riace to work in the refugee projects instead of feeling forced to emigrate (<https://www.welcomingspaces.eu/>)

Despite the success stories mentioned above, Riace's fortunes appear to have changed. The conflict against Riace's strategy now appears to be different. Italy's immigration and integration policies have become more stringent as a result of the nomination of the far-right Salvini as interior minister. In accordance with Decree Law 113/2018, the government abolished the scholarship that permitted refugees to find employment and replaced the national system that provided financial assistance to all applicants for asylum with one that only assists those who have been officially recognized as refugees. (<https://www.dw.com/>) Domenico Lucano, a former mayor of Riace and current head of an NGO, was given a sentence of more than 13 years in jail on September 30, 2021, for encouraging illegal immigration and for "irregularities" in the handling of asylum applicants. He was imprisoned together with 25 other residents, many of whom were social workers and project managers, who dedicated all of their time and effort to aid the numerous immigrants that the Prefect sent to Rome, frequently on a voluntary basis because public funds were slow to arrive.

The community is quickly transforming from a village of immigrants and a model of hospitality to once more becoming a ghost town. Significantly fewer migrants are now present, and local Italians who worked in the refugee initiatives have lost their jobs and left the country to look for employment elsewhere. (<https://adventure.com>) Hope is offered, however, by the fact that a growing number of other dwindling European towns have been motivated to start programs for refugees as a result of the socioeconomic revival of Riace and comparable places. These dwindling towns share many characteristics with Riace in terms of their social makeup and their struggles.

## 2.1. THE ARCHIPELAGOS

### 2.1a. The System

The intelligence of Archipelagos divides and separates. The European spirit hates everything solid, in contrast embraces polymorphy and diversity. The dialogue between the individual entities of archipelagos will eventually lead to supernatural end, the finale of a constant fight towards Ithaca. The nature of archipelagos cannot follow any particular hierarchy, that's why islands cannot form a solid state, the individualities of archipelagos belong one to another because none has its own centre. (Cacciari M. 1997). In reality the centre is nothing else than the force that each of them generates in order to exceed its own self. European harmony is dialogue and war at the same time. The end of the war would mean the end of Europe as an entity.

We need to imagine a voyage through the islands where as a common focus is the self consciousness, the self knowledge which will help us to redefine ourselves. The peak of this prominence we will find the relationship. At the peak of the differences we might find the community. A community of islands that sail one towards and against one another, but each of them has a clear self consciousness not being a simple individuality but being a complete unity that has to impose itself in the centre of a hierarchical spatial entity, the Mediterranean.

What about if we start imagining the Mediterranean as an archipelago? An entity which has the form of a hybrid state and composite culture in which the simple dualism of First and Third Worlds collapses and there emerges what Homi Bhabha (Bhabha H. 1994) call 'differential communality' and what Felix Guattari (Guattari F. 1973) refers to as the 'process of Heterogenesis'.

So far studies on Orientalism and specifically by Edward Said (Said, W.E. 1979), dictates that the West in order to self define itself has to do it through other-determination. Has to first say that it is not the East. That shows the dominion relationship that West has towards East. It is Europe that articulates the Orient, this articulation is the prerequisite not a weak master, but of a genuine creator, whose life-giving power represents, animates, constitutes the otherwise silent and dangerous space beyond familiar. Orientalism is never far from what Denys Hay (Hay D. 1957) has called the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying 'us Europeans as against all those non Europeans, where the European identity appear as a hegemonic culture where is promotes its superiority versus all the non European cultures and populations.

The Mediterranean is fundamentally a product formed by the imperial core of Orientalism, it simultaneously offered both the origin and contemporary theatre of European power. We have to consider that if Europe continues seeing the Mediterranean in the frame of aesthetic and cultural measure of virgin nature and lost ancient world, has definitely going backwards, because the Mediterranean's South and Northern shores violent resistance have repeatedly disturbed that view historically breaching their borders in the past, present and future (Chambers I. 2008). The implosion of that division and distinction of the hermetic border between the West and the rest comes to be challenged. The term such democracy and freedom refers less to political conditions and rather more to the registration of the cultural constellation in which they provide the unchallenged conduits of occidental choice and the universalisation of a western order. In the present epoch or globalisation just as once was extensions of Alexander empire or the thirteen century world system overseen by islam connecting sicily spain via egypt and the far east, here we seek to map of what Breudel referred as global Mediterranean, a sea that promotes the adoption of amore liquid cartography. This provocative presence indicates both route and bridge, a pontos, as Massimo Cacciari (Cacciari M. 1997) suggests, that link together a complex heterogeneity in an archipelagos. The idea of not that of a return to origins, but rather that of a counter reply to the history-destineness of Europe.



The archipelagos can be the idea which sits in between West and East and North and South, an actual entity which can supersede Orientalism and form the base of a federation that needs much more than tolerance of diversity. It requires precisely the re-assembly of being and becoming Europe that has been proposed by the Jewish Algerian philosopher Jacques Derrida (Derrida J. 1998). To critique the language that establishes its premises through a violent annihilation of alterity- this could be the new identity of the modern European state. As the Italian critic Sandro Mezzadra suggests, to address the very definition of European "we", far away from the ongoing Orientalism point of view of the previous centuries.

We have to think of the archipelagos not as finished edifice which counteracts the way the West sees the world, but as ruin. A ruin that through its rumble, history emerges from its unity. Under the conformity of the past lie the vast regions of debris traces and a diverse topography of damaged memories and forgotten lives that reside in time, a time that is disturbingly always now. The archipelagos is eluded by the metaphorical force of the sea, with its waves, winds, currents, tides and storms, where earth touches the sky in the infinity of the horizon that promises a journey, a navigation providing a more suitable frame for recognising the unstable location of historical knowledge than the restricted location of a landlocked world with fixed identity and kinship. This archipelagos turns out to be the site for experimentation where it is possible to engage the outside of the history of modernity, questioning of history as status quo. The seeming solidity of the lands, languages, and lineages that border and extend outward from its shores here become an accessory to its fluid centrality. (Chambers I. 2008. pp 20-30). If the archipelagos was painting would be different than the one of Turner's 1829: *Ulysses Deriding Polyphemus* - Homer's *Odyssey* (National Gallery London), where the Mediterranean is a site simultaneously of antique civilizations and the sublime excesses of untamed nature, a site very much preferred by tourists. A site which is largely represented only by the northern shore of the Med. If we have to imagine the new painting would be an image of the liquid territory not so much as a border or barrier between all four horizons but as a convoluted zone of flow of currents. It is also here that history and the insistent navigation of Ulysses, intent on reaching the self-knowledge and self-definition of what is home, loses its bearing and drifts before winds sustained by the polyphonic challenge of a multiple modernity and polycentric Mediterranean.



Fig.53 Turner's 1829 painting :  
*Ulysses Deriding Polyphemus*  
 - Homer's *Odyssey*  
 (source : National Gallery London)



The Orient for the individual traveller in the nineteenth century was different between British and French speakers. For the British was India, their dominion, to go through the Near Orient was therefore to pass en route to a large colony. Their imagination is limited due to realities that administration and power exercise was not allowing them to play. For the French in contrast was imbued with the sense of acute loss in the Orient. He came there to a place in which France, Unlike Britain, had no sovereign presence. Consequently, French pilgrims Volney planned and projected for, imagined, ruminate about places that were principally in their minds, they constructed schemes for a typically French, perhaps even European, concert in the Orient. Their Orient was the one of the memories, suggestive ruins, forgotten secrets, hidden correspondences and an almost virtuosic style of being. (Said, W.E. 1979. pp. 169-170) Today on the other hand, there are signs of change. Oriental literature has begun to be studied again for its own sake, and a new understanding of the East is being gained.

At the moment we can think of the Mediterranean as an imaginary liquid road, a space which acts as a border between East and West. We can imagine those islands similar to the view in the road movie *Route 181*, a collaborative work from the Palestinian director Michale Khleifi and the Israeli director Eyal Sivan. They created a journey, an imaginary direction that followed the partition line imposed by the UN in 1947 between Israel and Palestine. This virtual line of separation cracks and depletes as diverse maps, meaning and stories which pop up along the route. The gathering of words, sounds, music, gestures, bodies and memories as well as the demolition, or rehabilitation of ex Palestinian villages form an archipelagos of restrained stories fixed by institutional fanaticism and some others which throw back their past with their frustrated existence. The disunion of time and place, of memories and identities fails to detain the journey as poetics continue to be against the imposed order or rationalism and realism. There are invisible frontiers that run across the world map, snaking through both First and Third World cities, countries and regions, stretching over the territories of both centre and periphery. In that sense our environment remains colonial space. If we can imagine an archipelagos would be with an identity which opposes the one of the solid sea, where the Mediterranean is being calcified through orders of frontier, with rigid existence, tied to tourism, trade and military forces. A border that is not meant to stop you but as the Greeks say a border line that is the starting point of something unfolding. That's why *Horismos* in Greek is, that is the Horizon, the boundary.

On the other side if we consider it as a city would be a city associated with the one of Naples, a European, Mediterranean and contemporary metropolis which proposes a breach and investigation of our inherited understanding of civic life, architecture and planning. Participating in progress without being fully absorbed in its agenda. (Chambers I. 2008. pp 42-49). A composite space where introduces the uneven and the unlined and proposes a constant return to an impenetrable dictionary of modern life to the emergency of an unstable language in which all city dwellers are set to configure. A city which cannot be separated from its historic context and at the same time from its world setting. Therefore the archipelagos, either as a city either as an idea, others as polycentric identity is not suggested to remain an enigma, beyond our border of understanding, but its there to make us see that its complexity suggest a different sense of understanding that requires us to complement a taxonomic cartography with an atlas of emotions. In order to appreciate the sense is both corporeal and temporal. A sense of place which is formulated on not what it is, rather on what becomes.

## 2.1.b Utopia - The Island as New Topos

*"Such has been the unspoken premise of the modern city of utopian individualism. By solitude I do not mean isolation. Isolation is a state of nature; solitude is the work of culture. Isolation is an imposition, solitude a Choice."*Brian Hatton

As Cacciari says Do islands absorb and integrate all the characteristics of the big states? Archipelagos does not mean to return to our routes. Archipelagos means a new beginning. (Cacciari M. 1997. pp. 47). The sea, this ancient threat hidden inside her, the new topos, the new beginning. The new topos is embraced by the sea and cannot be anything else than an island, far away from known paths, an island where new resurrection can take place, an utopia. Utopia definition is the absolute denial of association with a specific place. It Does not have a specific topography or location but is the place of (ef-topos ) eudemonia. An island the moment emerges from the sea appears as an utopia in a hostile environment that needs to be domesticated. Utopia is simultaneously a ship that sails ready for adventures as well as an island embraced by the sea. The new topos is in danger because still the old world has not learned yet to reproduce it. In order to be ready to give its light to the old world first it has to protect itself from the dangers.

*"In the endless interplay between ethos and topos we are forced to move beyond rigid positions and locations, beyond forms of judgement dependent upon the abstract identification of values that have already been decided and legislated for in advance."*Paul Carter

In utopia the meaning of tolerance expresses totally its identity. The absence of tolerance against everything which wishes to be individual and unique. Acceptance, co-living and collaboration are the main characteristics of utopia. We can never survive living alone and autonomous, disconnected from the historic and cosmic plot which each one of us is engaged in and evolves within it. The marriage of knowledge and power which forms the base of the new topos creates an enormous force which tends to exceed everything and create the supra-local. This is what Marx seems to be saying when he insists that the new society will emerge from the old, as internal contradictions lead to new developments, new possibilities and a widened intercourse between those caught up in the social relations of modern capitalism. ( Marx, K. 1973). What we are destined to face the reality of differences under the sign of homelessness, that of values, languages and histories that are interject to find their way out in a world that doesn't have any guarantees. This century marks the beginning of revolutions and conflicts between utopian powers, where their relationship with place and time is totally negative. It's a very important battle of the century in which the solution might be found in the placeless ( me-topo). That crashes with the foundations of the state as a regime.

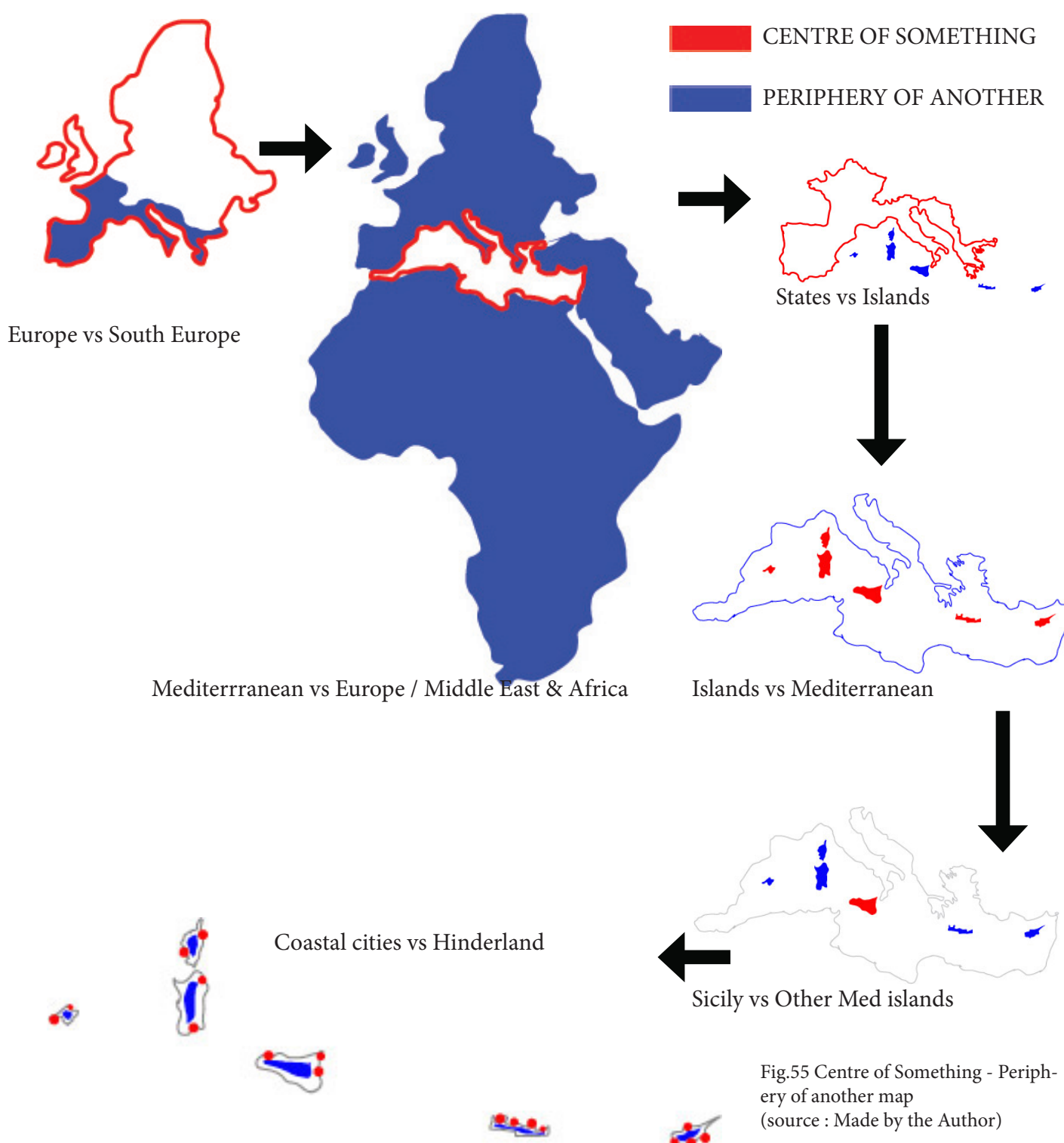


Fig.54 Utopia Thomas More (Louvain 1516) ( source : Ed. Thierry Martin )

## 2.2. THE SIX ISLANDS

### 2.2a. The Centre of Something the Periphery of Another

The peripheries will experience at variable rates the reversal of cultures which will take place along the axis of urbanisation, migration and human culture contacts. It is inevitable that questioning cultural identities, both in the centre and the peripheries is a very complex matter because we cannot view culture as a single model of hybrid existence but one of many possibilities. This is to open up a movement beyond ethnocentricity : to open up the possibility of the "representational practice that premised on the mutual imbrication of "us" and "them" (Chambers I. 1993). In this context, to think of power is not about fighting between idiosyncratic blocks. We move from politics of margins to the politics of difference : an act which deposes old powers and insight that once placed and explained the edge, the periphery, the "others".





## 2.2b. The Mediterranean Spine - Island Federation Vision

The island's integration in the EU is fragile because of their socio political and economic status. EU cohesion policies will have a durable repercussions for many territories but specially for insular communities such as are the islands. The idea of using an island as a dispute between political campaigns or philosophies as a metaphor in old European literature and history such as Homer's "Odyssey", Thomas Moore's "Utopia" to Daniel Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe". Those works aimed to criticise states, religions and propose a new form of governance. Thus the islands should reflect on their future within the broader spatial dimensions.

Utopia has not been envisioned only by scholars but also from European Institutions. The off the Coast of Europe report (EURILS & CPMR (2002) created an utopian scenario. the utopian invention of the archipelago of Merodia, and envisaged two scenarios of two different futures that can have this island region over the next 50 years in the EU. Both scenarios are plotted within similar events but the results and evolution of consequences are diametrically opposite. The first scenario envisioned the archipelago confronting several periods of crises which eventually fricing out of the Union. While the second scenario is more optimistic and discredits the EU policy for the islands, it understands , evaluates and exercises its power promoting flexibility and solidarity between this insular territory and the Union.

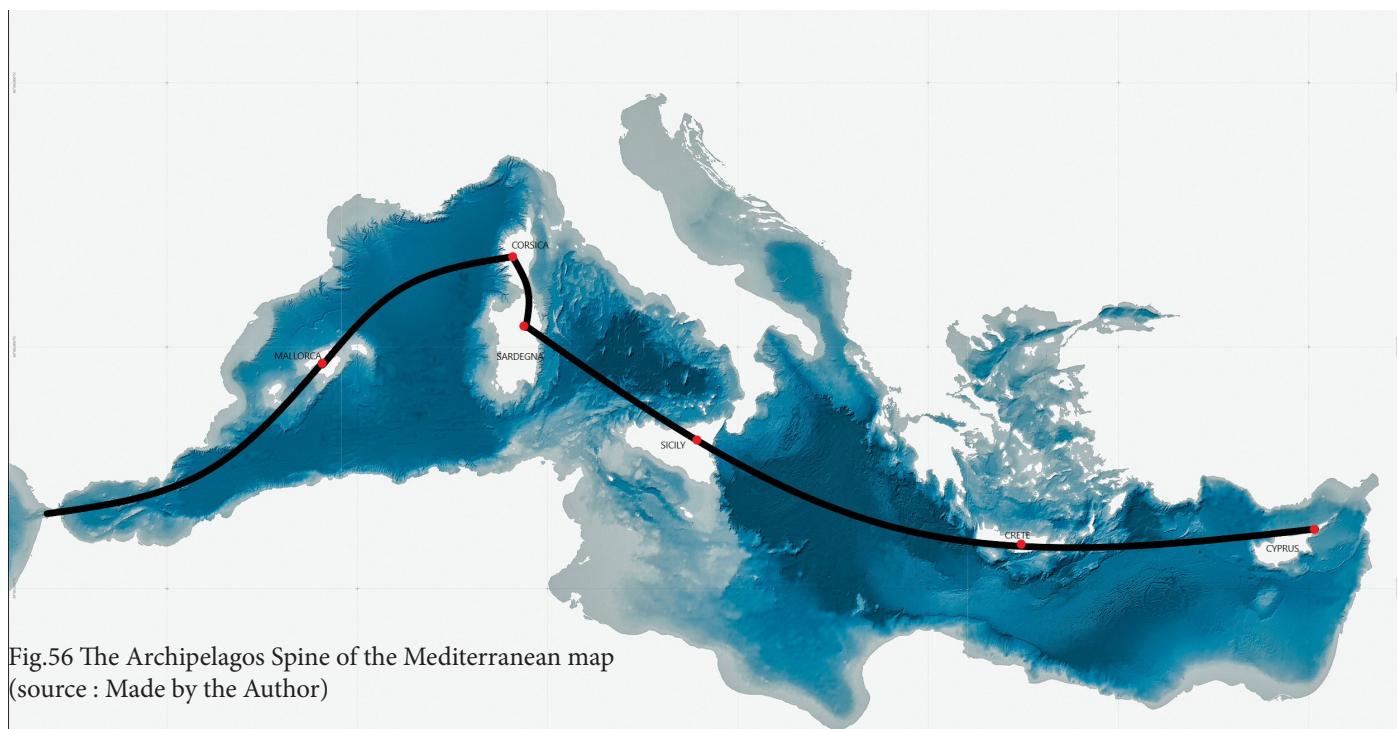


Fig.56 The Archipelagos Spine of the Mediterranean map  
(source : Made by the Author)

A common outcome from both scenarios is that apart from affecting the 200,000 inhabitants of the islands of Merodia, they affect Europe as a whole. Where Merodia is located? This Utopia is nowhere and everywhere at the same time. The twin island as described by Jonathan Swift in his "Gulliver's Travels" is, in fact, a flying island which constantly overflows its mainland. The events storming Merodia there are nothing else than real events that either took place or will eventually take place on the islands of the EU in the future. The only difference is that all those events in this not sp Utopic scenario are concentrated in a single territory.



This study which concentrates on the Mediterranean puts on the table for discussion a vision where the archipelagos of the Mediterranean, its six largest islands can form an island federation which expands beyond political borders. An entity, a *Renius Regionis* where both the territory and fluid identity of its new citizen will form a space which acts as the centre of one and the periphery of another. This federation acts as the spine of the mediterranean which simultaneously acts as a bridge between its main axis, the smaller island microcms and the shores of the Mediterranean. It's not a ghetto, it's an enclave , a living laboratory for the future, a bridge of development which is based its existence ona fertile osmosis between the inside and the outside, a federation that is based on a society that auto-organises itself. Its an utopia but from the other side promises a radial future accommodated by high technology. The digital nomad functions as the director of an orchestra which aims to organise human energies in a harmonic way. It's true that the technologies are not bad or good, but are defined only on how humans decide to use them. The digital nomads follow a mental aperture, flexibility, dynamism, cosmopolitanism, autonomy, light spirit and metamorphosis. The metamorphosis doens mean losing their own identity or faking up their real self. In contrast their nature is a composite mosaic of apolietric identity like Rubik's cube, which wherever they live and move their identity repsinds in synergy with the genius loci.

The citizens of the island federation maintain the characteristics of their archaic ancestors. They are the new Tuareg of Sahara, which in their genes are written the DNA of mobility and which eventually bring cohesion and connection between spaces and symbiotic living with the environment. The saharan desert with its Tuareg nomads is the space and citizens which connects the north african states with the equatorial africa in the same way that the mediterranean sea with its island spine together with its digital nomad citizens connect the east with the west as well as the rest of the world.

The Mediterranean is a connector between Europe and Africa as is The Sahara for North Africa and Equatorial Africa. New citizen of the Med is like the Tuareg Nomad of the Sahara.

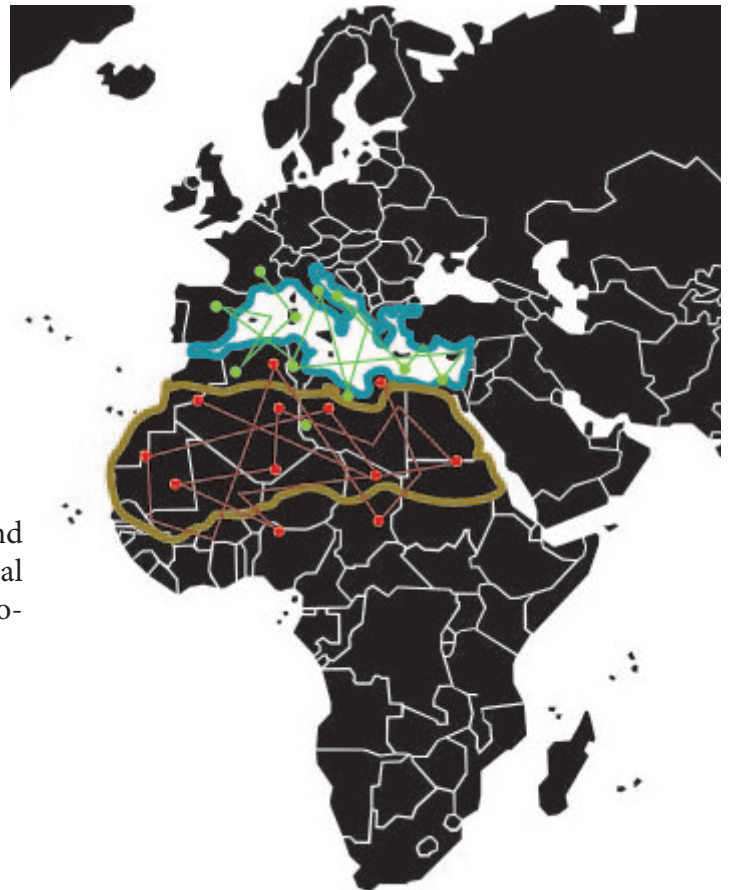


Fig.57 The Mediterranean vs Sahara, Nomads as connections Map  
( source : Made by the Author)

## 2.3. THE CITIZENT

### 2.3.a Nomadism

What is essential to distinguish is the difference between the Nomad, the Settler and the Migrant. The settlers are groups which live and work in a fixed location. Migrants are people who moved to new locations permanently or all over long periods of time but the new place is not their ethnic place of origin, for example the modern expats. Nomads on the contrary are people which often move into different locations based both or only on necessity or as a choice of lifestyle. (Schagwein D. (2018).

*“All human populations are in some sense immigrants. All hostility between different cultures in one place has an aspect of the classic immigrant grudge against the next boatload approaching the shore. To defend one’s home and fields and ancestral graves against invasion seems a right. But to claim unique possession—to compound the fact of settlement with the aspect of a landscape into an abstract of eternal and immutable ownership”—is a joke.*—Neal Ascherson

The med for the past 4000 years and more had always invited people, migrants, made them engage with the territory and civilised them. As Baudel says there has been three main migration invitations in the Med. 2000 years ago the indo european tribes until the barbaric tribes on the north, then the arab and the turks while for the past 1000 years where the west started to be stable the med had mstable migrations century by century. (Brudel F. 2006) We have to imagine the return of the archaic people after the destruction of Troy, like Aeneas and Odysseus and their journey in the med. Every village receives migrants from his favourite place and the migrants unite with the locals under systems which change collaboration, dealing with disputes efficiently where the locals depend a lot from the money coming from the migrants.

Local Internal immigration was also taking place in the Mediterranean. Those nomads called poimenas brought connection between mountains and valleys. This particular group of people had its own category and was not part of the system typical for the rest of the population. The interference between the nomads and the local population usually took place in intermediate zones where they exchange their products and make commerce deals. Nomadism as definition dictates people with no fixed residence which move from place to place seasonally within a well defined territory.

The abandoning of small villages and the migration of local population to the north have been happening for the past 100 years in this vicious circle which has deteriorated the Mediterranean and partially recovered it through tourism but in a harsh and invaded way. All over the med in our century tends to destroy, divide every trace of unity that thousands years of history had united. The slow process of the population becoming permanent in one place is changing. We are experiencing the end of a vital movement. The med has traditionally been inhabited by nomads which engaged with territory, evolved and created communities and is formed by the arrival of new cultures and populations.

## 2.3b. Digital Nomads

### Prophetic visioners

Even if Nomadism traces back to traditional nomadism, digital nomadism became recognised as a mainstream phenomenon a few years after the World economic crisis of 2008, where both companies and people tried to find more cost efficient ways of living and operating. We have the appearance of dedicated online communities (e.g Nomad List), coworking spaces and world conferences dedicated to digital nomads such as ( DNX Conferences ). In a more individualistic way back in 2000 we have the first IT companies which started accepting remote working for software developers but the actual term itself dates back in the 1990's from ( Makimoto & Manners. 1997). Pioneer examples have been also made earlier from ( Roberts, S. K. 1984) and few other concepts have been made back in 1960's ( McLuhan, M. 1964).

Those different authors have visioned digital nomadism in various ways but have contributed towards what digital nomadism stands for today. Mc Luhan "global village" in his book *The Gutenberg Galaxy : The making of Typographic Man*, ( Mc Luchan .1962) pictured nomads that have reduced physical distances using facilities on the road, he predicted the internet in a way that people manage to communicate and exchange ideas through it. Back in the 1980's where we have the big transition between the industrialised age (The Second wave) and the appearance of the first computers which dictated the entry to information age (The Third wave), Toffler described that age as a society and economy which is based on digital technologies and envisioned an "electric cottage" from which workers could work remotely. ( Toffler A. 1980) ). The pioneer who actually created the term digital nomad is Makimoto and Manners who wrote the book *Digital Nomad*, which predicted that in the 21st century technology will allow people to choose to become mobile around the planet and raised the dilemma of asking themselves , am I a Nomad or Settler? Makimoto envisioned that the internet will provide a liberatory utopia in which workers could log on from the beach, work four hours per week and the rest of their time will dedicated to having fun experiencing their hobbies. He envisioned positive lifestyle that is not depending on location, lives in temporary cities, overruns and diminishing governments and national borders and has laconian behaviour towards consumerism. ( Makimoto &Manners. 1997)

### Post Millenium trend

Already since the World economic crisis in 2008 and more intensely now during Covid 19 pandemic era has brought up a new rase of nomadism that of the digital nomad where the remote working made possible for lots of people to migrate and live in remote, less populated areas where they could live more freely, with lower cost of living and in more desirable places. The appearance of social media, facebook, instagram promoted a more visual communication which supports digital nomadism , as products, services are advertised beyond spatial dimensions. In addition the appearance of cryptocurrencies allowed financial transactions that do not rely on actual banks and nation states allowed the viability and money movement much easier and accessible from everywhere.

Digital nomads are workers which are not required to show up in person to conduct their work, they are location independent and their primary employment takes place on the internet. But which are the characteristics of digital nomad today? We have first to have a macro view across the globe.

Analysing 4,000 polls and survey responses from English-speaking digital nomads around the world have yielded some interesting findings which are worth mentioning. The composition of the research has been done by "A Brother Abroad. (<https://abrotherabroad.com/digital-nomad-statistics/#Digital-Nomad-FAQs>)

Over 35,000,000 digital nomads of various countries were reported by surveys in 2021. The global digital community, if it were a nation, would come in at number 41 in terms of population, right behind Canada and Morocco, and number 38 in terms of gross national revenue, right behind Saudi Arabia and Portugal (\$23,200 average yearly income per person). The total annual spending by digital nomads is estimated to be \$787,000,000, which represents the economic value of the global digital nomad community.



## Statistics & Characteristics

The digital nomad community is split evenly between males (50.19%) and females (49.81%) where most (76%) of digital nomads are white (European descent), followed by Latino/Hispanic nomads (10%), Asian nomads (8%), and black (African descent) nomads at 6%. USA has the highest (31% of digital nomads), Portugal (8% of digital nomads), Germany (7% of digital nomads), and Brazil (5%). The US citizens make up 31% of digital nomads across the globe and are the most represented nationality in the digital nomad community followed by Portugal (8%), Germany (7%), and Brazil (5%) which four comprise 51% of digital nomads' nationalities across the globe. The remaining 49% of nomads surveyed represent 35 other countries. The powerful passport becomes the most significant factor for being a digital nomad, in addition to freedom from family obligations, and some income. The education status is quite high as only 1/3 (29.6%) of digital nomads have no higher education, the other 2/3 distribute as 26% have an undergraduate degree, 37% have a graduate degree, and 7.4% have a Ph.D. or MD. (<https://digitalnomadsobs.org/>)

The average digital nomad is 40 years old, 47% of digital nomads are in their 30's. The majority (61%) starting their nomadic life in their 20's and 39% starting in their 30's or later. The 66% prefer to stay in a single place for 3-6 months while 80% prefer to stay in one place for 3-9 months. It's very important to mention that when someone decides to be a digital nomad, they don't do it for a short period of time only. The 30% of nomads are on the road travelling for two years or less, the 50% for four years or less and the other 30% have been travelling for 10 years plus. That makes that on average a nomad has been travelling for 6.1 years.

In the US millennials are the most highly educated generation at 38% (Fry 2018 :54) but the super high rising tuition costs and the very expensive health care has put them in loan dept like no other. The high accommodation costs and the low salaries and the fewer job opportunities promote their exodus from the country. In the United Kingdom the millennials make up the 13.9% which 19% of them live in London. The government provided pension schemes to the baby boomer generation but for the millennials those benefits are provided to less than 10% of private sector employees who enrol in defined contribution schemes instead. Young adults have less and less opportunities to establish themselves in the UK so looking at their future elsewhere is helping them a lot. In the EU 1/3 of the population is under the age of 30 (eurostat 2015), where they find the job market difficult to navigate and establish themselves. Of course Europe has unequal job opportunities with the Northern countries such as Netherlands, Austria and Germany with high rates of employment but Greece, Spain and Italy with low rates. Following those trajectories young people and young couples are less likely to have a family and lots of them remain childfree and unmarried.

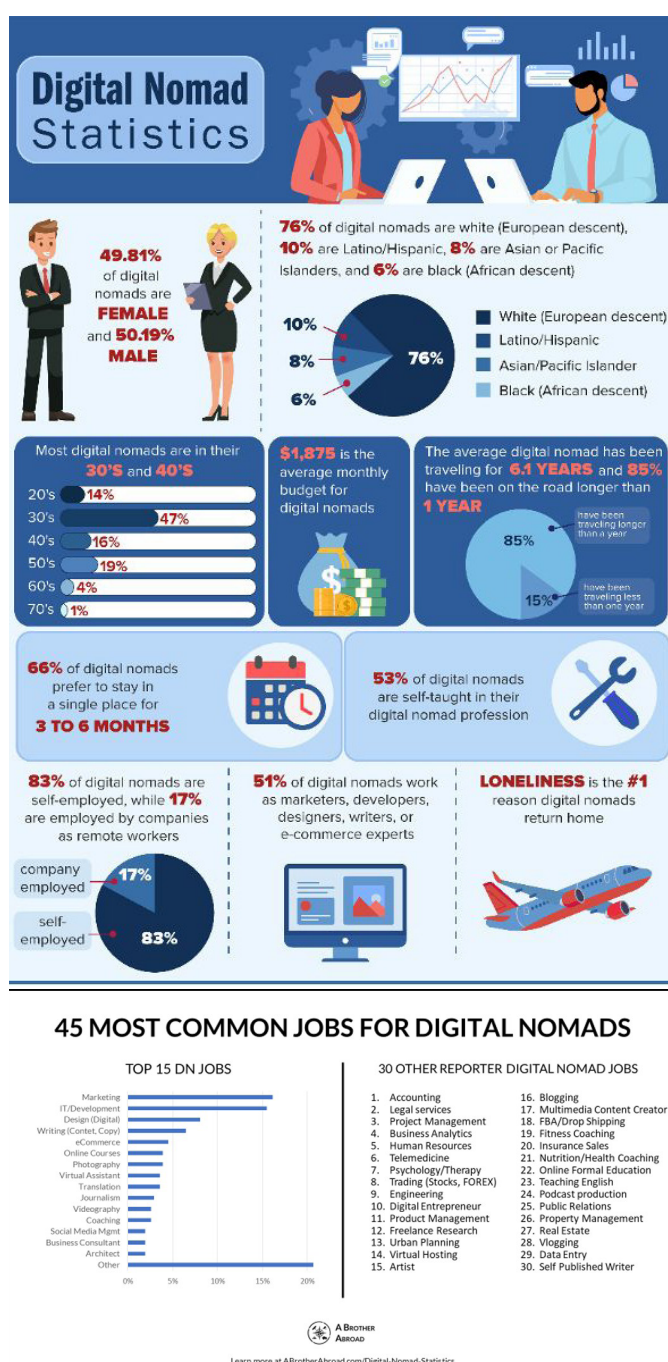


Fig.58 Digital nomad statistics board  
( source : digital nomads observatory)



The majority of digital nomads are self-employed (83%) of which  $\frac{2}{3}$  of them own their own business and  $\frac{1}{3}$  are freelancing while the other 17% are employed by companies as remote workers. The most common professions for digital nomads are those dealing with marketing, IT and web design, writers, but also a whopping 14% are professions more classic such as architects, engineers and planners.

According to the digital nomads observatory (<https://digitalnomadsobs.org/>) seven key factors are taken into consideration when deciding where to live. Environment, cost of living, transportation and mobility, safety, interactive community, workplace connectivity, and activities. The cost of living is lower than their salary, and fast, reliable internet is the top consideration for 56% of nomads when choosing a location. Because of how their lifestyles enable them to interact with the amenities and natural beauty of the location they choose to reside in, 11% of digital nomads do not need vacations. Due to their itinerant lifestyle, they favour places close to or in between significant airports and ports with access to the rest of the world.. They also prefer places where they feel safe, with low criminal rates, political systems that are not authoritarian and there is a relative freedom of speech and religious and sexual orientation.

It is astonishing that 9 of the top 10 preferred Top locations are coastal counties that have mild and hot climates which ensure outdoor activities and outdoor living. The top 10 preferable countries are: Mexico, Thailand, Indonesia, Colombia, Vietnam, Costa Rica, Brazil, Philippines while in the Mediterranean area are Turkey and Portugal. All top-10 countries are on coastal locations and have income less than 22.000 dollars. While other notable locations to be aware of that follow this trend are southern Italy, Nicaragua, South Africa, Croatia, Egypt, Cambodia, Ecuador, Spain, southern India, and Bulgaria. In West Europe Portugal is the first choice, Turkey in Minor Asia, Croatia in Eastern Europe and South Africa in Africa. 34% of votes from All digital nomads takes South East Asia due to low cost of life and then follows Central America with 16% and South America with 13%.

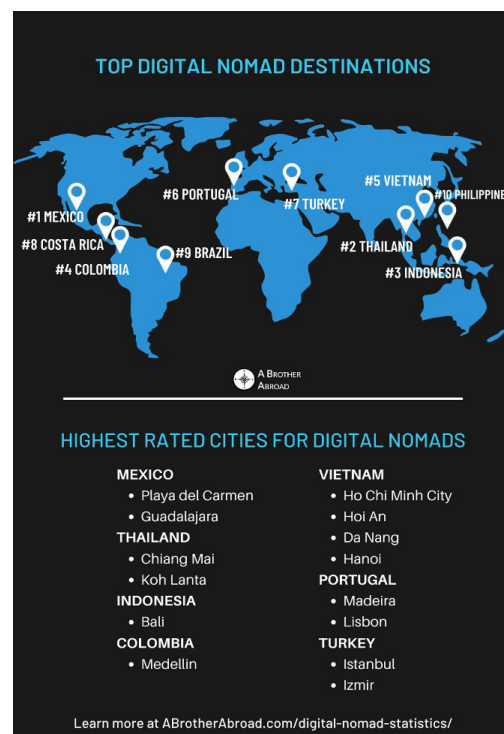


Fig.59 Digital nomad destinations map ( source : digital nomads observatory)

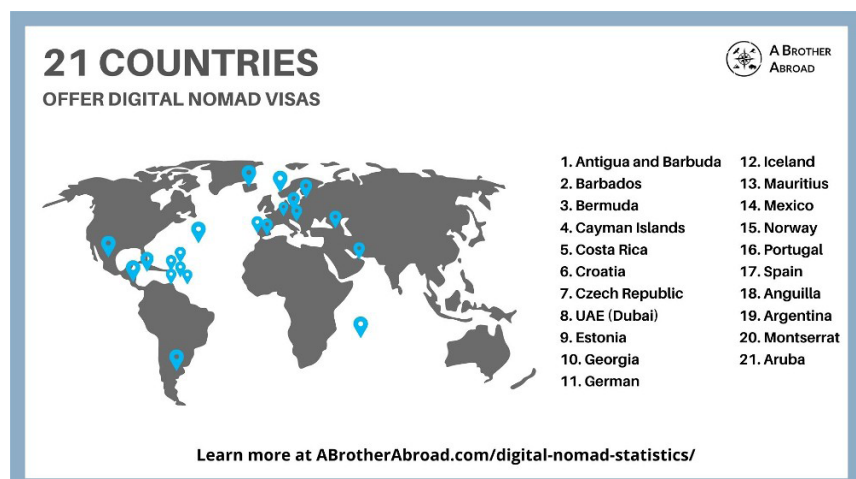


Fig.60 Digital nomad visas map ( source : digital nomads observatory)

The global economic value of digital nomads is 787,000,000,000 dollars, and their ability to significantly boost local economies through an influx of capital and investments has prompted national governments to develop favorable conditions for their invitation. Since most nomads have their own health insurance and social services, the host nation incurs little to no expense. Currently, 28 nations have extended visas that are beneficial to nomads, while 21 countries have created special visas for digital nomads.

Digital Nomads have the choice to work from wherever they want , the work space is mostly selected by the way they can be focused. Some require a white noise background energy while some others need to be in complete silence environments. 23% of them prefer to work in the home or accommodation, 21% prefer to work in co-working spaces, 14% in cafes and only 6% in public libraries. The common characteristic is that they all prefer at least once per week to work in zones where they can interact with other people for social and mental health reasons. (<https://digitalnomadsobs.org/>)

In fact the main struggles of nomads is the sense of loneliness and travel fatigue as well as to maintain old customers in new places as they travel. As nomads travelled for longer periods they preferred staying longer in one location until they aged out from their nomadic style of life. Then they usually follow two ways. Or they return to their home country or they stay as expats in the preferred location where they mostly spend their last trips before they age out of nomadic life.

Few studies are based on empirical evidence outside of Gandini's (Gandini,A. 2016) study of location independent workers in Europe, work on labour in the sharing economy. The findings show even if nomads are free to spend their time wherever they want they do not have great financial status as they can no longer count on full-time employment like their parents did. However that situation is not faced only by the digital nomads but also by millenials which in the developed nations they are eliving do not anymore benefit from the welfare state that previous generations did, specially post war or baby boomers.

Now just coming out of the post pandemic era, that trend still keeps on but still is under debate on how long can be established and maybe will eventually take the form of a hybrid system where nomadism and permanence coexist. We might experience the creation of a new hybrid citizen which can interact both with a place of origin and the hosting of a new place.

### 2.3c. Odysseus as the New Citizent

As Nietzsche insisted ( Nietzsche, F.1973), there are no facts, only interpretations. Just as the narrative of the nation involves the construction of an “imaginary community” a sense of belonging sustained as much by fantasy and the imagination as by any geographical or physical reality, so our sense of ourselves is also labour of the imagination, a fiction, a particular story that makes sense.

We tend to imagine ourselves with strong identity, concrete beliefs and complete far along of being fragmented and cracked. We are the authors and not the narrative that defines our lives. That enclosed condition of our imaginative self is that permits us to do. According to Ian Chambers ( Chambers I. 1993) we are now beginning to learn to act in the subjunctive mode, as if we had a full identity, while admitting that such a stupidity is an imminent failure. This proves that the migration flows from Continent to Continent , metropolis to countryside contains complex transformations that are beyond modernism and capitalism. Those complexities do not follow a cognitive frame that unites all those histories together.

As Murray Schafer in his book “The Tuning of the World ” (Schafer, R. Murray. 1977) calls a “ soundscape” that exemplifies an erratic collage of sounds that are manipulated and folded up both by the producer and the consumer. Each listener or producer has the power to rearrange the surrounding soundscape constructing dialogues that he releases into the web.

The contemporary nomadism uses technology such as radio, laptop, mobile phone and credit card, but while computers and cards transit you through a topic space in virtual cord than fleshy reality where time is lethal and space incidental, the Walkman he says, in contrary brings the world into you, reforms your body and laconically signals a diasporic identity put together in a transit. The new citizen is represented by the walkman which is both mask and masque. appears as the iconic gadget that reflects the nomadic modernity in which music , in constant fluidity moves, decontextualized and recontextualised in the broader flux of daily life. (Chambers I. (1993. pp. 70-77 )



Fig.61 Odyssean Geography map( source : Peter T Struck's study 2000)

Walkman is the instrument that represents the contemporary space where is like living on the frontiers of techne, a metaphor, a poem allured by technology and innovation that apparently the ancient gap between science and music is recuperated. In the passage from rigidity to fluidity, from binaries to bifurcation, inherited identities and roles enter the malleable space of time (Derrida, J. ( 1998).

*"To be simultaneously rooted and rootless"*  
Trinh T. Minh-ha



The illusions of identity organised around the privileged voice and stable subjectivity of the 'external observer' are swept up and broken down in a movement that no longer permits the obvious institution of self identity between thought and reality. (Chambers I. 1993) ) In this designative moment, habits, identities and cultures of local, regional, national and global territories cannot be concealed and framed into a single map. Knowledge escapes from a rigid and rigid piece of work but evolves as a fluid substance of the sea.

The new citizen has a personality which can surpass geographical and ideological limits with capacity to enter into other cultures and defend diversity. These individuals which have a rare ability of fast thinking, entering smoothly in any real or virtual habitat maintaining intact their complex identity. Movement for them is not reflected by going from one place to another but to go through problems, living worlds and landscapes of senses. They are the new nomads which depend mostly on continuous and fast transformation of landscapes, economies, science, technology, professions and mental journeys. In homage of Marshal McLuhan ( McLuhan, M. 1962) they can be defined as a tribe which is de-territorialised, heterogeneous and master of technology. Their need is to give another sense on work, add value beyond money and time. They demonstrate a physical strength which promotes intelligence. Their space-emotional status initially creates the sense of lost but enhances their sensory tools in a way to be more critical, be good listeners and to participate in depth into the reality. They are not the people of the weekend, they don't follow the status of double life but instead move into a spirit relative between space and time. They evolve in a leasing urbanism environments. They can measure chaos but they can't predict the future evolutions.

These are the people of the third millennium as John Perry Barlow says, a creator of Electronic Frontier Foundation, which predicts that humanity, thanks to the evolution of the internet, is an organism of collectivity. This new citizens, the digital nomads are the evolution of their ancestors such as the explorers of the new lands such as Phoenicians and Magellano, The discoveries of the new world, the Victorian British empire dominion as well as the recent ex-pats people such as diplomats, missionaries and military professionals.

The digital nomads live in enclaves that are part of the nation that they belong to but they are under a special autonomous zone that moves through local and global, rendering in that way a new frontier that has an immune system, decentralised, orientated on action, memory and communication.

The new nomad is more connected to the real human nature, the one of the prehistoric hunter. Regains this nostalgic loss of primitive communal spirit where the collective "we" has been diminished under the egoistic "I". The digital nomad uses the new technologies to create a global village of high definition that foresees the future and creates a philosophy of living based on empathy and collectivity. As the Umberto Galimberti says "a body multiple and collective" and Luther Blissett "a body pred over the internet". A voyager, the modern Odysseus.



## 3.1 THE SIX LARGE ISLANDS

## 3.1.a Beyond Island Space

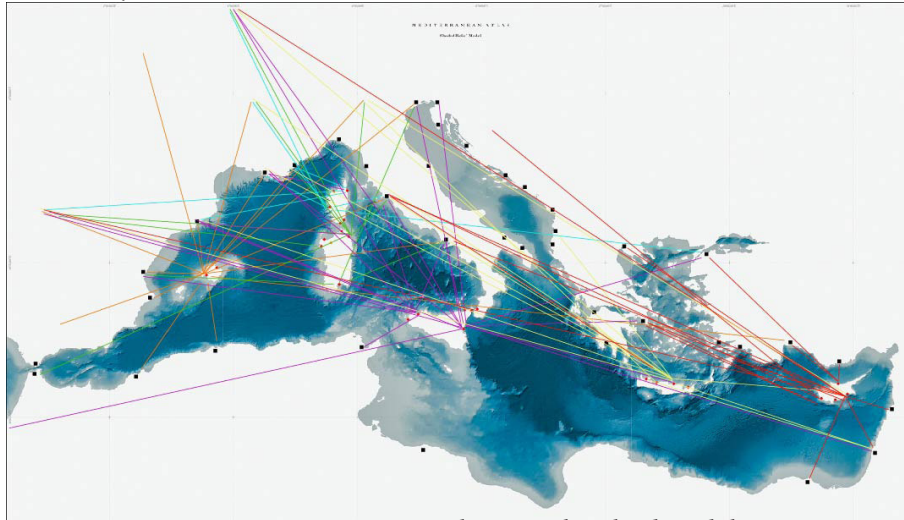


Fig.62 Air routes Map- Direct connections between the Islands and the Mainland Mediterranean countries. Each colour represents each island. ( source : made by the Author)

Sicily, Sardegna, Cyprus, Corsica, Crete and Mallorca are the six largest islands of the EU & in the mediterranean which spatially form the spine of the mediterranean sea and also notially distinguish the Northern from the Southern part. Those islands are home of 10.000.000 people and cover an area of 80.000sqKm.

Mediterranean islands have been territories conquered and possessed by emerging powers through history. Cyprus gained its independence in the 1960's from Britain while independence of the majority of the islands became part of their mainlands. Sardegna, Crete and Sicily voluntarily joined their motherland while Balearic Islands and Corsica joined their motherland by force.

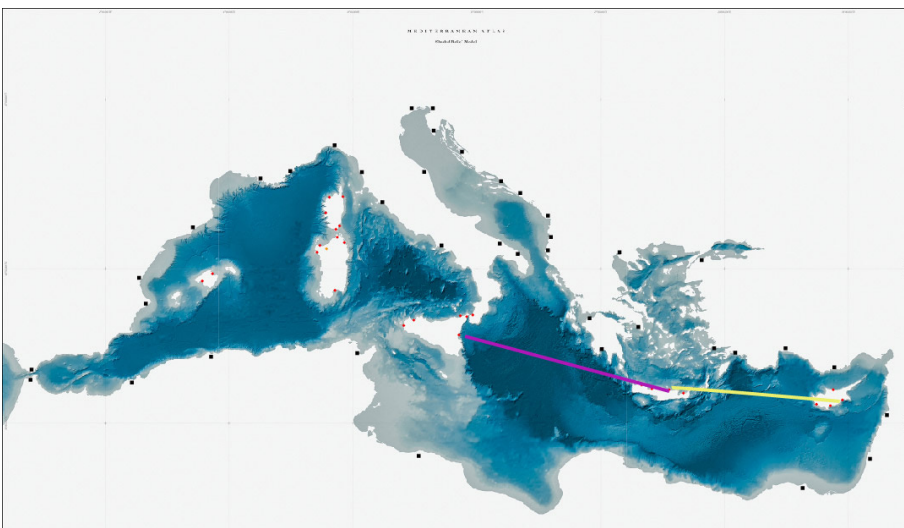


Fig.63 Air routes Map- Direct connection between island to island (source : made by the Author)

Each island is directly frequently connected by air all year around with the mainland of the state it belongs to , and seasonally connected ( during spring and summer ) with other European countries especially from the North.

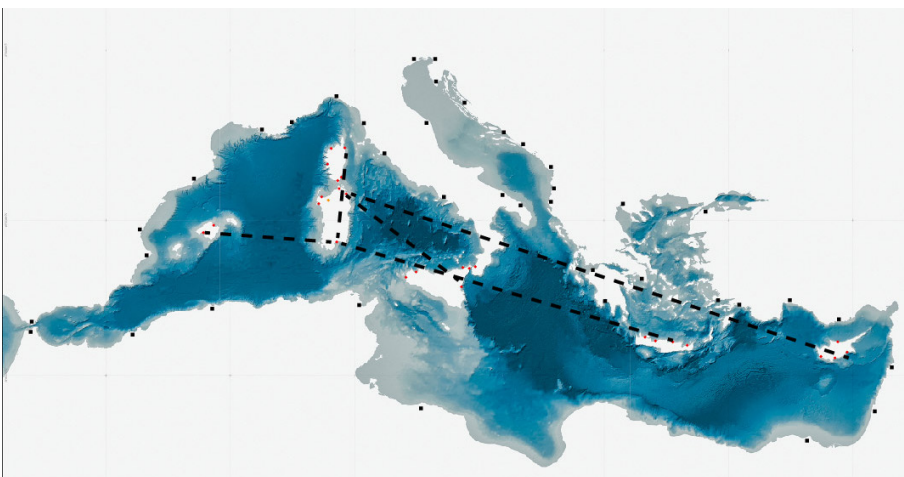


Fig.64 Air routes Map- Potential direct connection between the islands (source : made by the Author)

Direct connection by air between the islands is almost nonexistent and currently (2022) only Cyprus is connected with Crete, and Crete with Sicily..

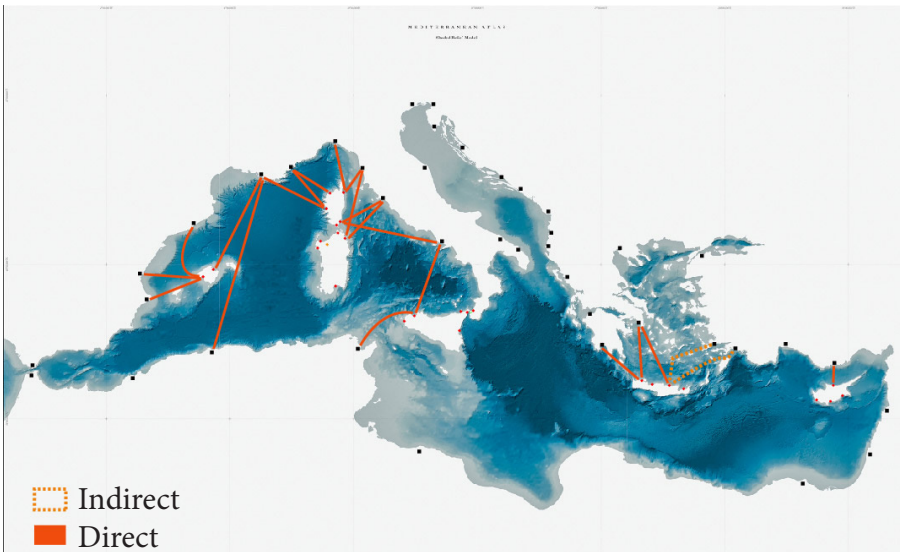


Fig.65 Sea routes Map - Between the islands and Mainland Mediterranean countries  
(source : made by the Author)

Direct and indirect ferry routes are only between the islands and the states they belong to. The Only exception is Sicily with Tunis.

The only available direct connection between the islands is Sardegna with Corsica and Sardegna with Sicily.

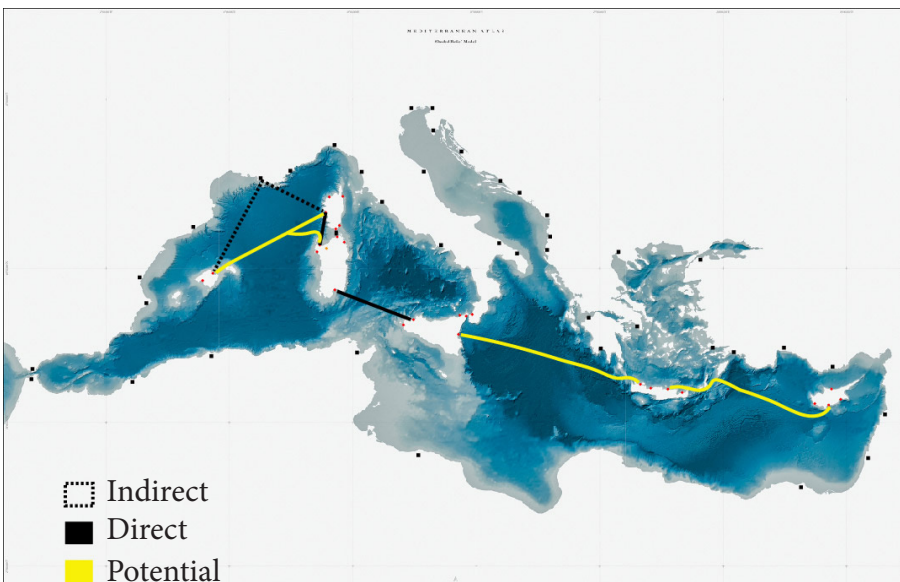


Fig.66 Sea routes Map - Between the islands  
(source : made by the Author)

The new ferry connection between Athens and Cyprus which inaugurated summer 2022 give to the island nation an alternative way of transport which shows a lot of potential for this to happen between the largest islands as well. Creating direct ferry connections between the islands will enhance their collaboration both economically and socially.(Spiekermann & Wegener. 2017).

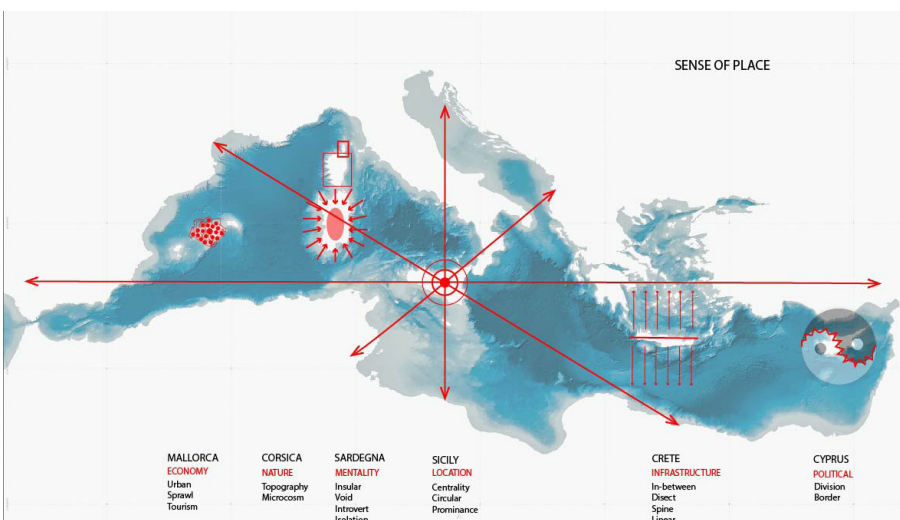


Fig.67 Sense of Place map of the six largest islands of the Mediterranean  
(source : made by the Author)



Sicily being in the centre of the mediterranean, in the connection between the east and west med as well as north and south med, has a prominent role. The cultural richness and being the most populated island in the Med confirms its strategic role.

Mount Etna, an active volcano the highest in the mediterranean, distinguishes this character of centrality, power and geographical evolution which represent all med. The paesi etnei do represent that, a circular organisation of clusters around a dominant physical topographic element such as the Active volcano of Etna.

In Sardegna the landscape is deeply connected to its society which explains why it has been developed so differently from the rest of the islands. Sardegna is more than anything an island, has maintained its own character keeping an introverted personality very different from its counterpart neighbours of Sicily, or Crete where the sea became a bridge to connect and interact with other cultural entities. For Sardegna the sea was an obstacle to cultural interchange but also a land ideal for its enemies to exploit its natural resources. Its inhabitants' strong need for survival resulted in concentration of population not on the coast such as in other islands but inland, deep in the hinterland. That resulted in the development of society that is characterised by mental isolation and introverted state of mind.

Cyprus the easternmost island in the med which belongs more to the middle east than europe. The dichotomy of the island represents that division and isolation. The municipalities chosen represent that isolation and the proximity to a strong border which divides and has strong character. It represents the political division of the med which divides the med as well between Christian european North and Muslim Arab South.

In Crete, the topography defines the Infrastructure, human intervention dictates the development of the island. It separates the busy north with the empty south. Apokoronas municipality is a region where that infrastructure divides the village clusters into two categories. North, close to the sea, south hilly and isolated.

Mallorca, the pioneer of Mediterranean tourist industry has a relatively flat territory, which is dispersed and very developed. An urban sprawl in the Mediterranean similar to the one in Mainland European cities. A dispersed territory with totally fragmented landscape which fuel by a strong touristic economy.

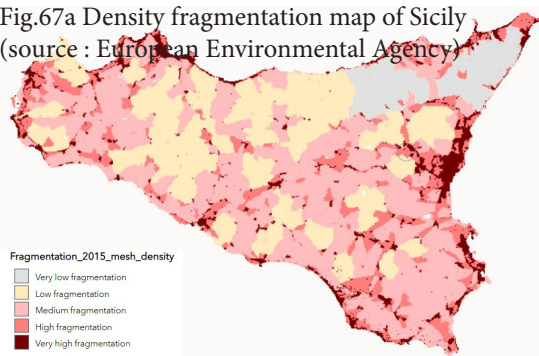
### 3.1b. Common Ground - Zone Selection

- Decline demographics
  - Proximity or in between large urban centre ( max 40min drive)
  - Semi-mountainous zone 200m-400m above sea level
  - Cluster of villages
  - Close to international airports
  - Close to agriculture and natural beauty assets
  - Relatively easy access by road
  - Proximity to alternative mean of transport ( Train)
  - Areas which have abandoned housing stock
- Visual access to continental europe or other archipelagos
- Close enough to education and health centres
  - Relative mild tourism
  - Similar characteristics of the village clusters
  - Close to major ports
  - Particular sense of place ( peninsula, volcano, agriculture identity, cultural asset etc)
  - Intermediate areas according to EU specification

## 3.2 THE ZONES

### 3.2a. Topographic landmark centrality - Sicily / Paesi Etnei & Val Simento

Fig.67a Density fragmentation map of Sicily  
(source : European Environmental Agency)



Size : 25708 km<sup>2</sup> Rank :1st of the Mediterranean islands  
Coastline : 1039 Km  
Total Population : 4,969,147  
Urban Density - 190 /sqKm  
Ports : 7 - International Airports 3

Fig.68 Depopulation map of Sicily  
(source :www.zeit.de ))

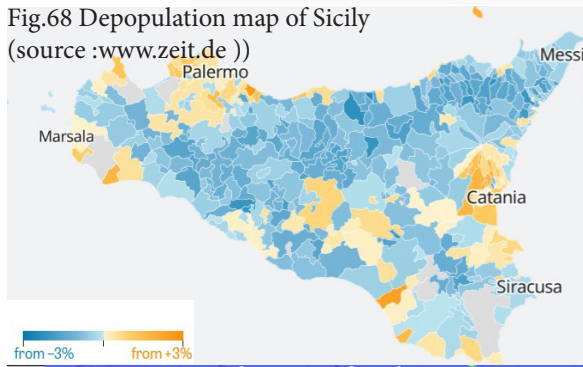
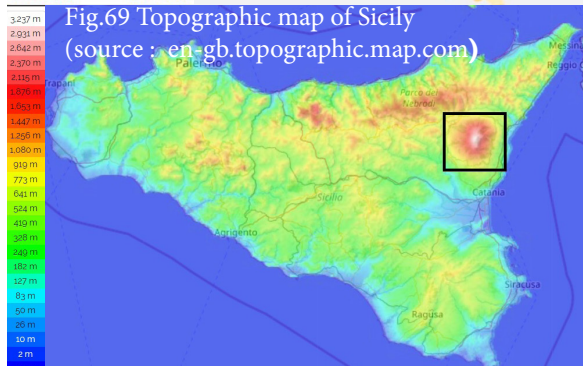


Fig.69 Topographic map of Sicily  
(source : en-gb.topographic.map.com)



One of the 20 regions of Italy and one of the five Italian autonomous regions and is officially referred to as Regione Siciliana. The region faces strong depopulation phenomenon.

Sicily has a predominantly hilly disposition. Hills occupy 62% of its surface while flatlands occupy 14% and mountains 24% including Mount Etna.

The Metropolitan region of Catania with around 950.000 population is dominated by the Biggest and most active volcano of Europe, Etna. Catania is the main city of 300.000 population, located at the South East of the Volcano. Around the volcano in a circular taxonomy are 41 villages known as Paesi Etnei. Two thirds from those clusters specially located on the North, West, Southwest and upper altitude of Etna are facing strong depopulation decline. Those villages have around 250.000 population (Area Interne. 2016).



Fig.70 Etna Volcano  
(source : italyonthisday.com)

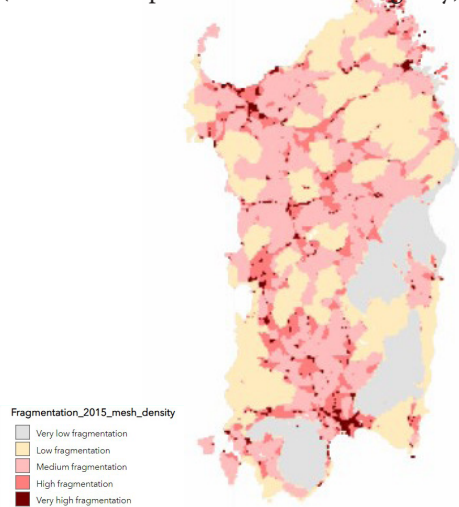


Fig.71 Paesi Etnei clusters & accessibility connection with Major urban centres map (source: made by the Author)



### 3.2b. Mental isolation - Sardegna / Alta Marmilla

Fig.72 Density fragmentation map of Sardegna  
(source : European Environmental Agency)



Size : 23812 km<sup>2</sup> ..... Rank : 2nd of the Mediterranean islands

Coastline : 1850 Km

Total Population : 1,628,384

Urban Density - 69 /sqKm

Ports : 5 - International Airports 3

Rail : 1,038 km of which most of the stations are closed due to bad maintenance and slow speed.

One of the 20 regions of Italy and one of the five Italian autonomous regions. In the past 20 years 71.4% of Sardinian villages have lost population (32 more than 20% and 115 between 10% and 20%), with over 30 of them being at risk to become ghost towns

The region of Marmilla is located in the southern-central part of Sardinia, Italy, in the province of the Middle Campidano and has low hills and vast agricultural zones. It covers 415 square kilometres, and had a population of 25,619 in 2014. It consists of 18 villages which do not exceed 300 inhabitants such as Setzu and Las Plassas with 151 and 240 inhabitants respectively. ( PRELIMINARE DI STRATEGIA SARDEGNA \_ ALTA MARMILLA. (2020)



Fig.75 Alta Marmilla agriculture plains  
(source : sardegnaturismo.it)

Fig.73 Depopulation map of Sardegna  
(source : www.zeit.de)

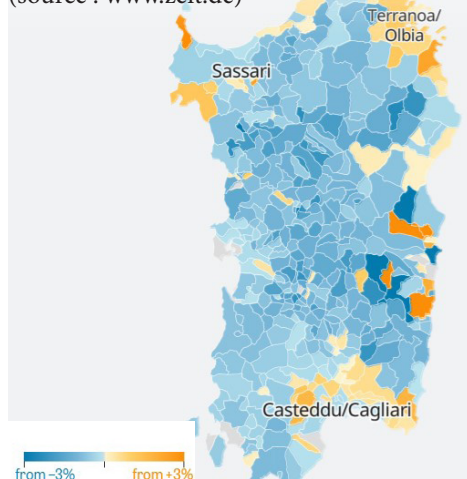


Fig.74 Topographic map of Sardegna  
(source : en-gb.topographic.map.com)

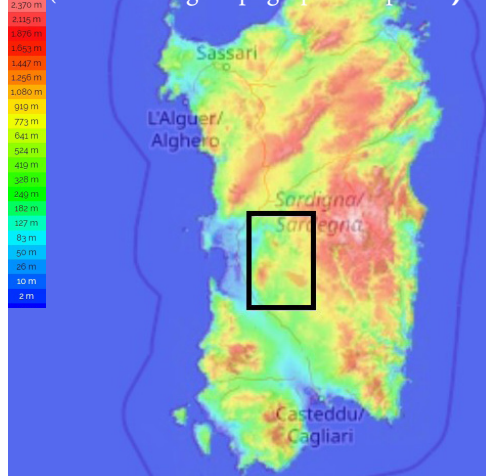
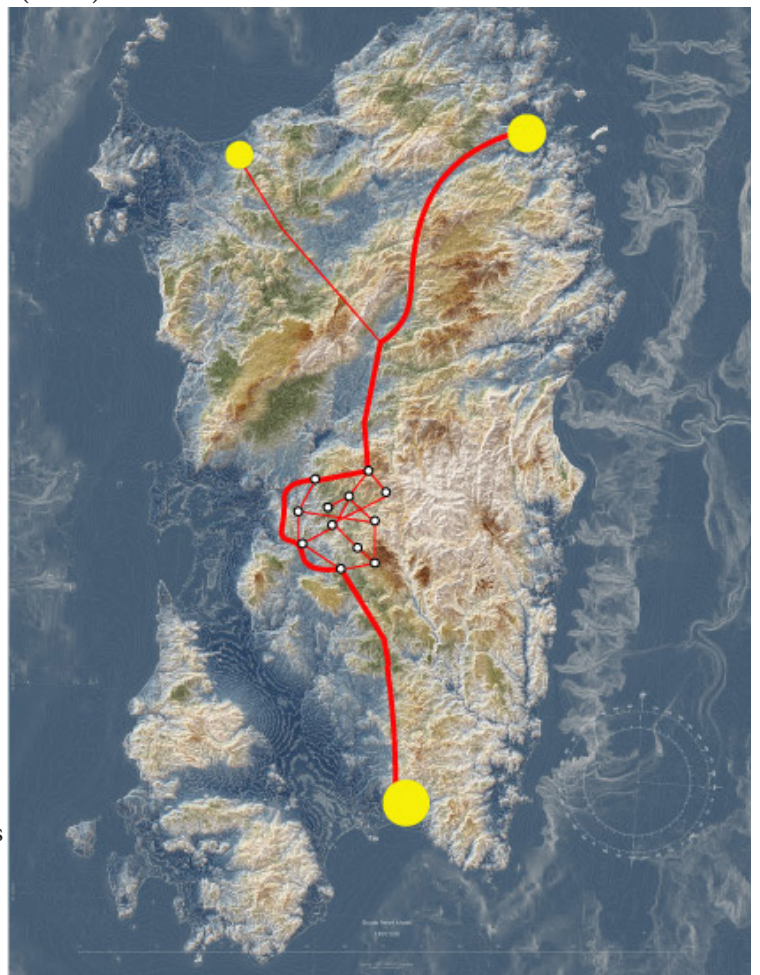


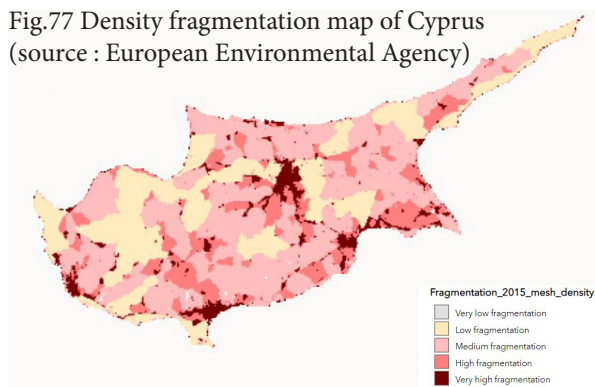
Fig.76 Alta Marmilla clusters & accessibility connection with Major urban centres map (source: made by the Author)





### 3.2c. Political border division -Cyprus / Municipality of Chrysohous & East Paphos

Fig.77 Density fragmentation map of Cyprus  
(source : European Environmental Agency)



Size : 9,251 km<sup>2</sup> Rank :3rd of the Mediterranean islands  
Coastline : 648 Km  
Total Population : 1,230,312  
Urban Density - 132.5 per km<sup>2</sup>  
Ports : 5 - International Airports 2

Cyprus is an island state , a Republic which is dichotomised and consists of 59% of the entire island territory in the South West. The 36% is administered by the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus while the remaining 4% is a buffer zone administered by the UN. The capital Nicosia is the only dichotomic capital in Europe.

Fig.78 Topographic map of Cyprus  
(source : en-gb.topographic.map.com)

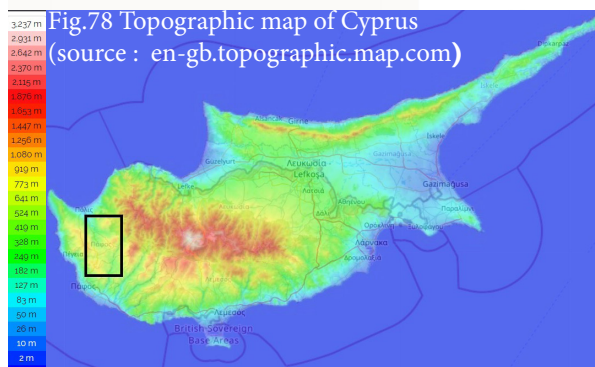


Fig.79 UN buffer zone in Cyprus  
(source : Getty Images)

The Municipality of East Paphos & Crysochous consists of 18 villages that have the lowest density and population increase in Cyprus. The taxonomy of the villages follows the natural topography stepped landscape and notionally follows the political division of Cyprus and the border line.

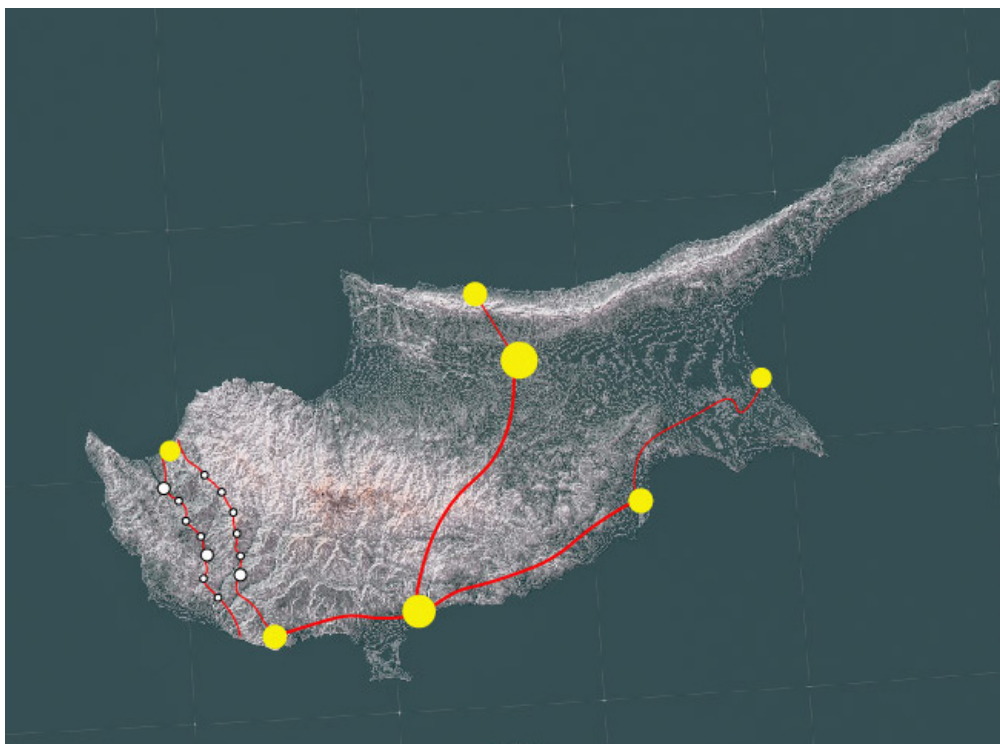


Fig.80 Municipality of Chrysohous & East Paphos clusters & accessibility connection with Major urban centres map (source: made by the Author)

### 3.2d. Natural microcosm -Corsica / Cap Corse

Fig.81 Density fragmentation map of Corsica (source : European Environmental Agency)

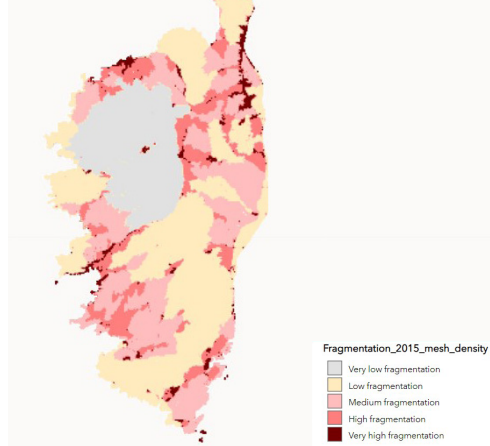


Fig.82 Depopulation map of Corsica (source : www.zeit.de)

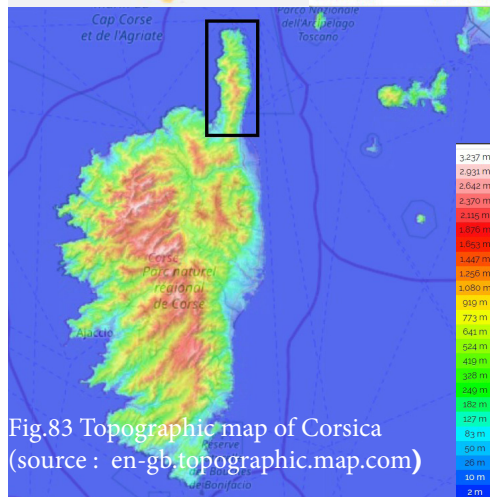
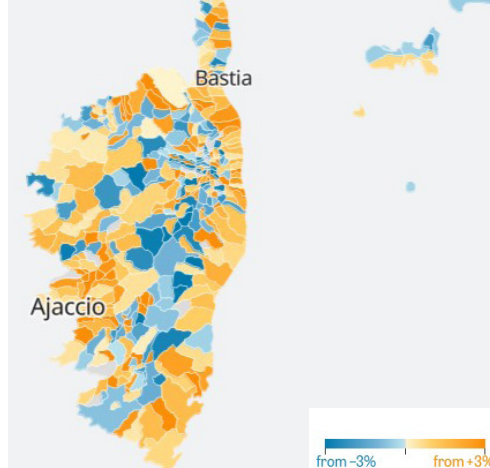


Fig.84 Aerial view of Cap Corse (source : dreamstime.com)

Size : 9,251 km<sup>2</sup> Rank : 4th of the Mediterranean islands

Coastline : 1000 Km

Total Population : 349,465

Urban Density - 30 per km<sup>2</sup>

Ports : 6 - International Airports 4

Railway : 232Km The main line runs between Bastia and Ajaccio and there is a branch line from Ponte Leccia to Calvi

One of the 18 regions of France and has a Territorial collectivity status. With 365 villages, many inhabited by less than 100 people, Corsica is the least densely populated 'region' of France.

The Topography is mainly mountainous that cover two thirds of the island. Due to this wild nature is considered the wettest & greenest island of the mediterranean.

Cap Corse is located on the Northeast part of the island and it consists of 18 villages with 6917 inhabitants, (max 1200 - min 80) The topography of the peninsula is a microcosm of the entire Corsica, rugged coastline and high peaks in the centre. Taxonomy of the clusters is formed primarily on high elevation, linked with a perimeter road with cross connection through the centre.

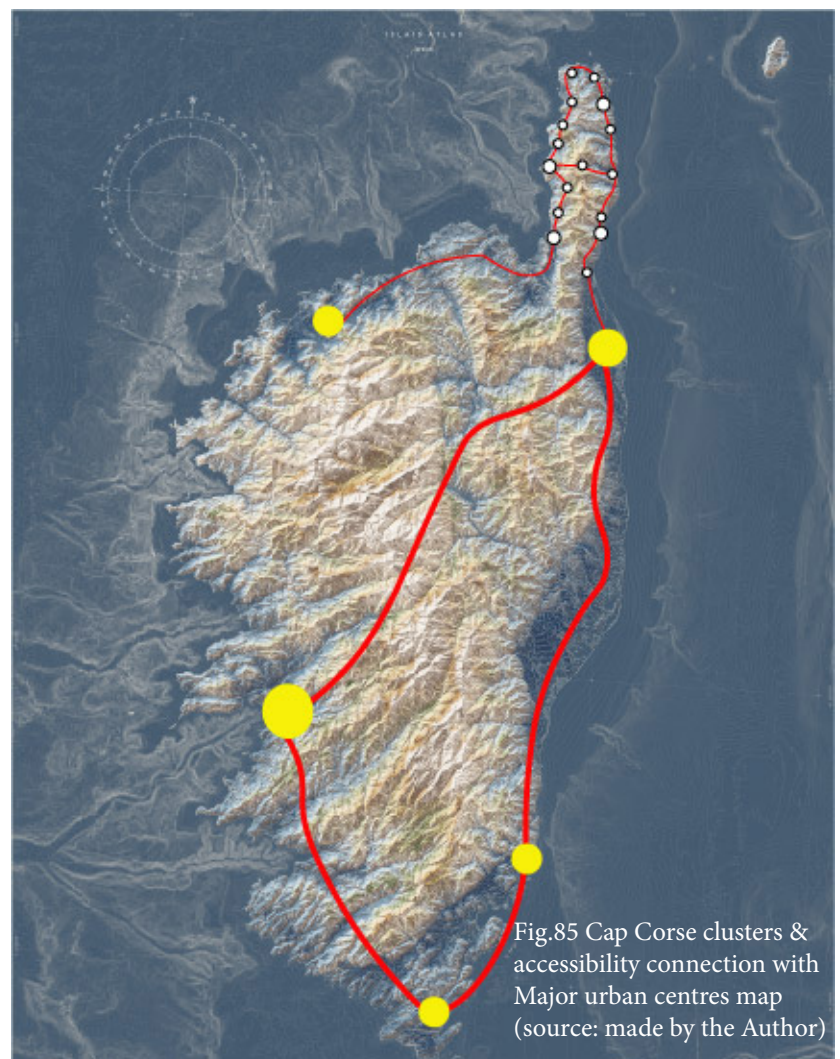
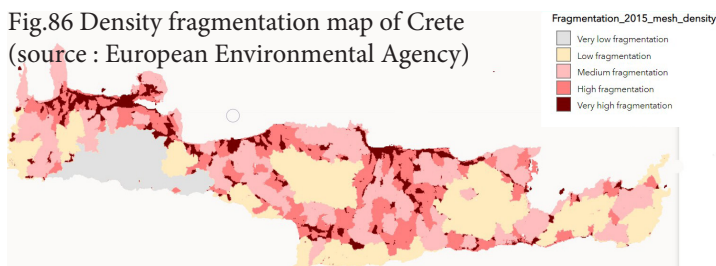


Fig.85 Cap Corse clusters & accessibility connection with Major urban centres map (source: made by the Author)



### 3.2e. Human infrastructure as spine - Crete / Municipality of Apokoronas

Fig.86 Density fragmentation map of Crete  
(source : European Environmental Agency)



Size : 9,251 km<sup>2</sup> Rank : 4th of the Mediterranean islands

Coastline : 1046 Km

Total Population : 621,340

Urban Density - 79 per km<sup>2</sup>

Ports : 5 - International Airports 2

Fig.87 Topographic map of Crete  
(source : en-gb.topographic.map.com)

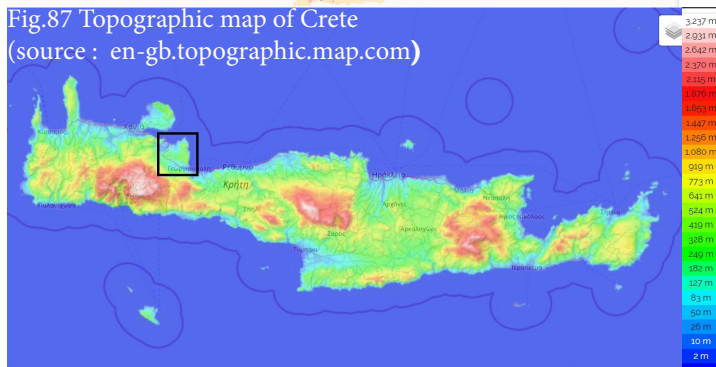


Fig.88 The main Highway of Crete (B.O.A.K)  
of Crete  
(source : crete.pl)

One of the 13 region sof Greece and doesnt have any special status

Apokoronas Municipality is part of Chania Prefecture and consist of 66 villages with total 12,807 inhabitants. In the 2021 census the population has dropped by almost 10%. The taxonomy of the clusters is dictated by the dichotomy of the municipality from the main infrastructure artery of Crete as wella s the variable topography.

Fig.89 Municipality of Apokoronas  
clusters & accessibility connection  
with Major urban centres map  
(source: made by the Author)

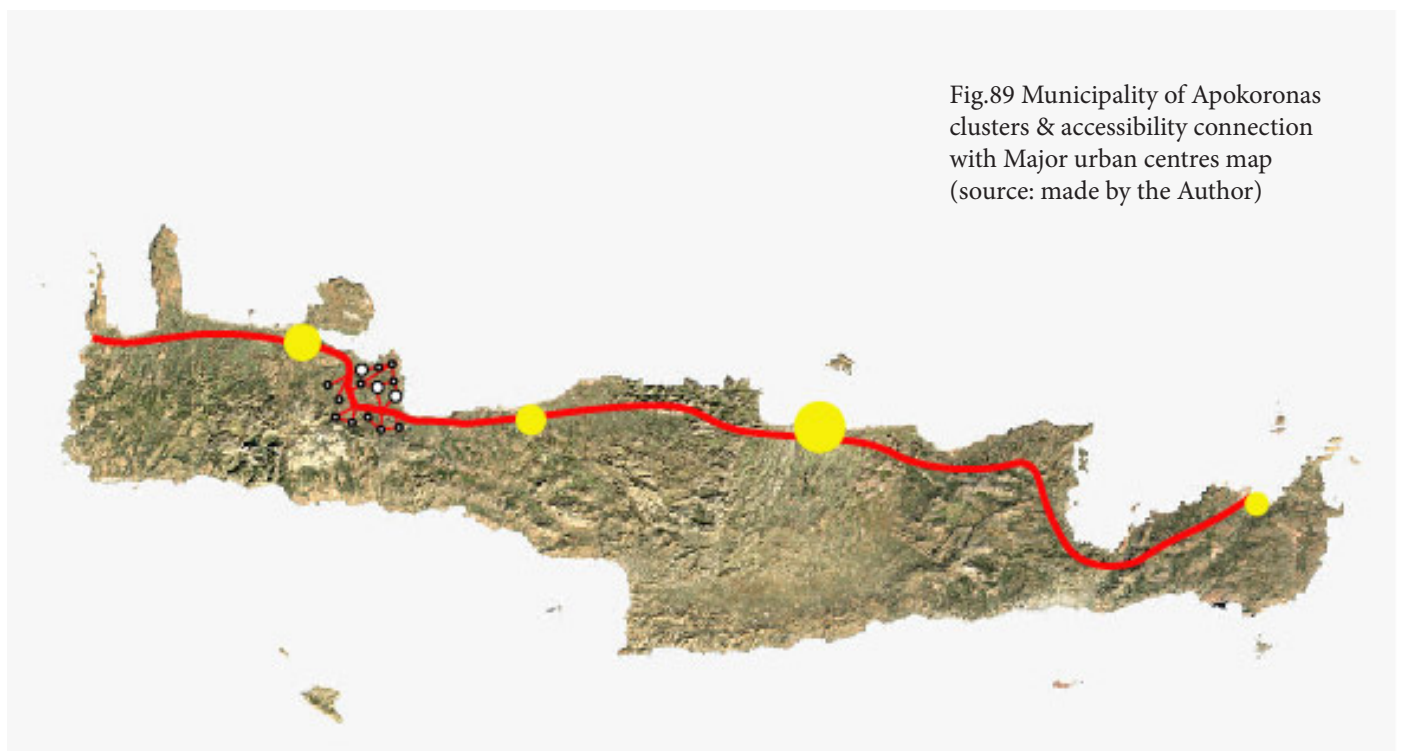




Fig.90 Density fragmentation map of Mallorca (source : European Environmental Agency)

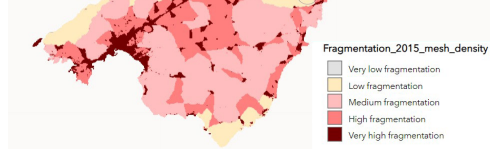


Fig.91 Depopulation map of Mallorca  
(source : [www.zeit.de](http://www.zeit.de))

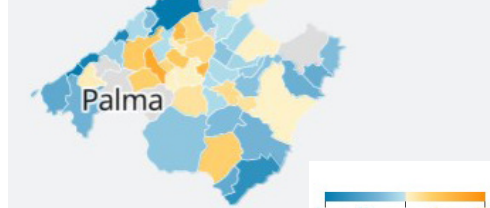
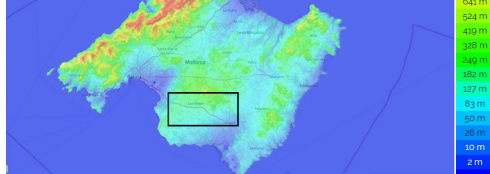


Fig.92 Topographic map of Mallorca  
(source : en-gb.topographic.map.com)

Size : 3,640 km<sup>2</sup> • Rank : • 6th of the Mediterranean islands •

Coastline : 555Km

Total Population : 896,038

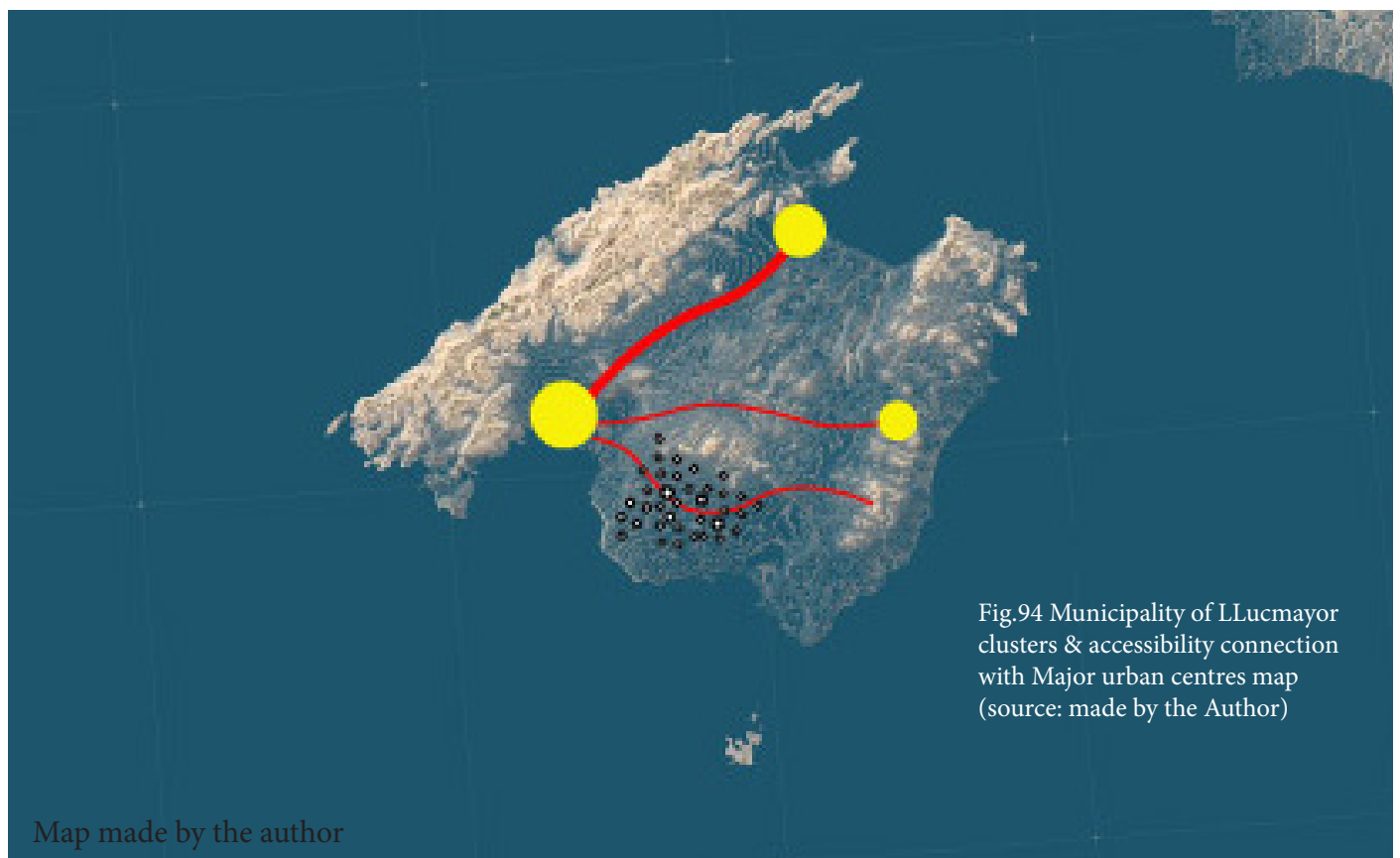
Urban Density - 240 per km<sup>2</sup>

Ports : 2 - International Airports 1



Fig.93 LLucmayor disperse landscape  
(source : creativecommons.org)

Llucmajor is the largest municipality of mallorca and has 16 urban settlements with total population of 36,358.. The taxonomy of the clusters is dispersed and the agricultural land is dotted with single housing units spread out forming another type of sprawl. (Hof A., Blázquez-Salom B. 2013).



Map made by the author

### 3.3.APOKORONAS MUNICIPALITY

#### 3.3a. Spatial Analysis Matrix

Municipality of Apokoronas covers an area of 323,13 sqkm and stretches North with the sea and South to the foothill of the White mountains. In 2011 had 12,807 population and in 2022 the population dropped by almost 1000 people.

Infrastructure facilities such as health centres, schools and administration buildings are mostly on the large scale clusters such as Vamos, Brysses, Kalybes, Georgiupoli and Fres. The rest clusters have none or a few facilities such as pharmacy, or medical office which usually is served twice per week. Tourism is an important asset for the municipality but is seasonal and has hotel and other accommodation facilities only on the coastal zones in clusters such as Georgiupoli, Almyrida, Kalybes and Gavros. Some other medium clusters have very few usually unofficial tourist accommodation facilities while most of the clusters south west and north east have total absence of touristic infrastructure. In Kokkino chorio and the surrounding clusters is observed urban sprawl of independent second homes mostly properties of foreign pensioners.

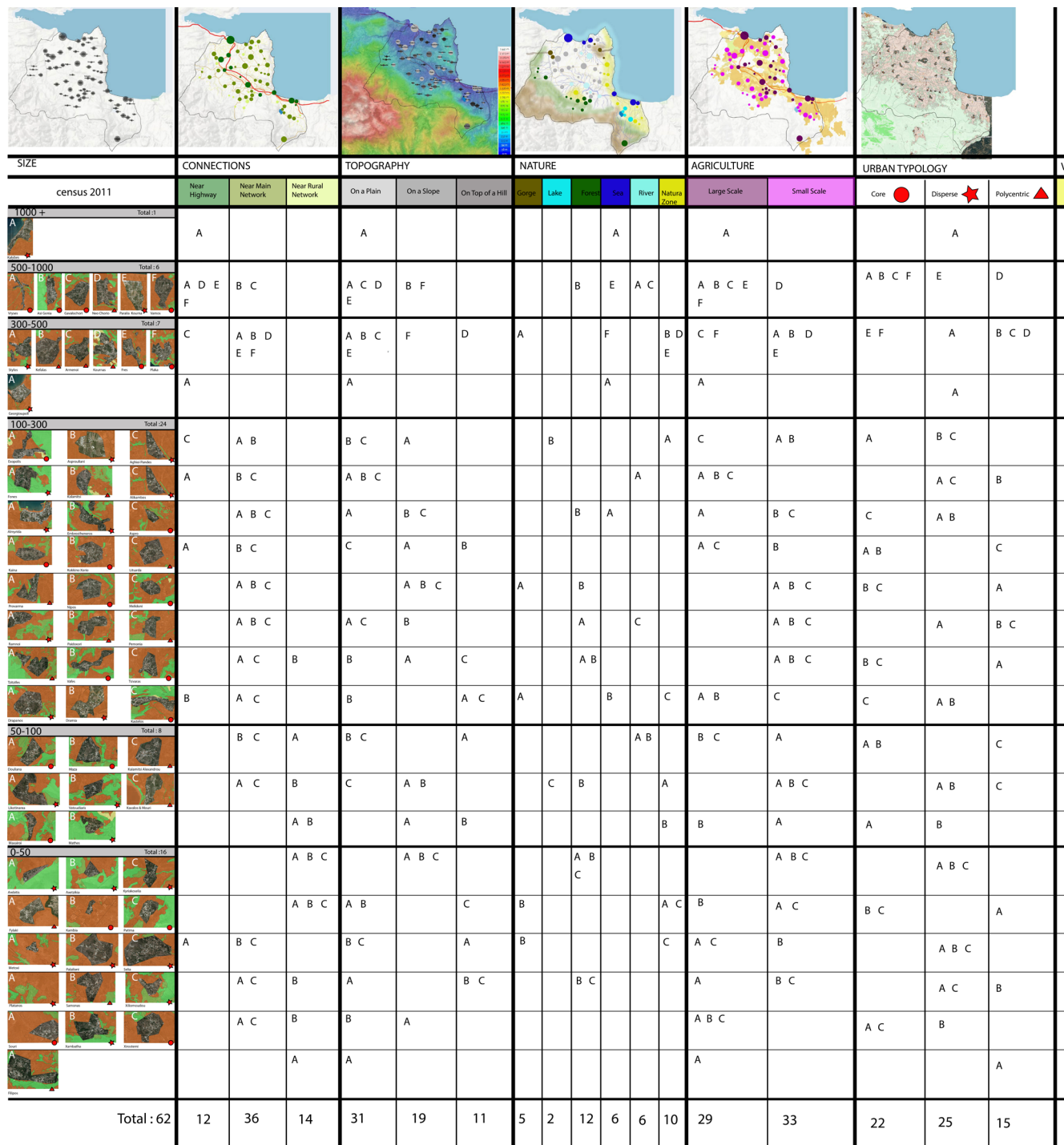


Fig.95 Apokoronas viles matrix board (source : made by the Athor)



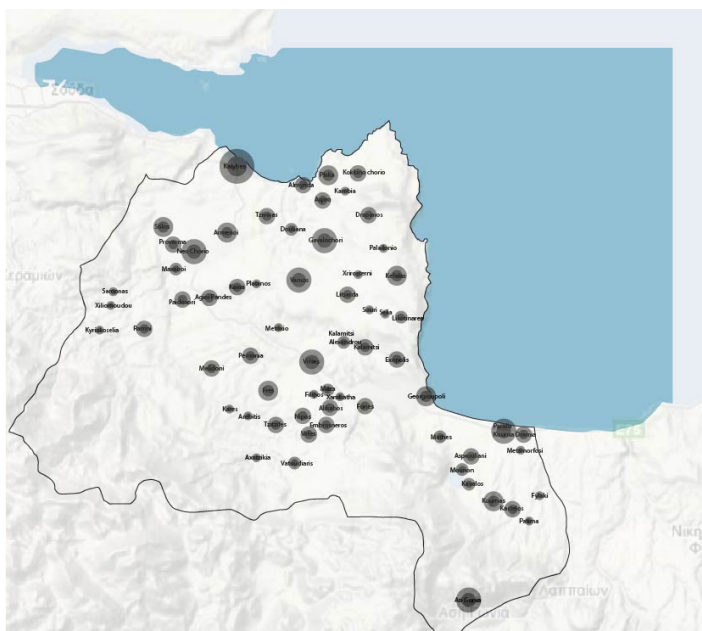


Fig.96 Urban clusters according to population Map  
(source: made by the Author)

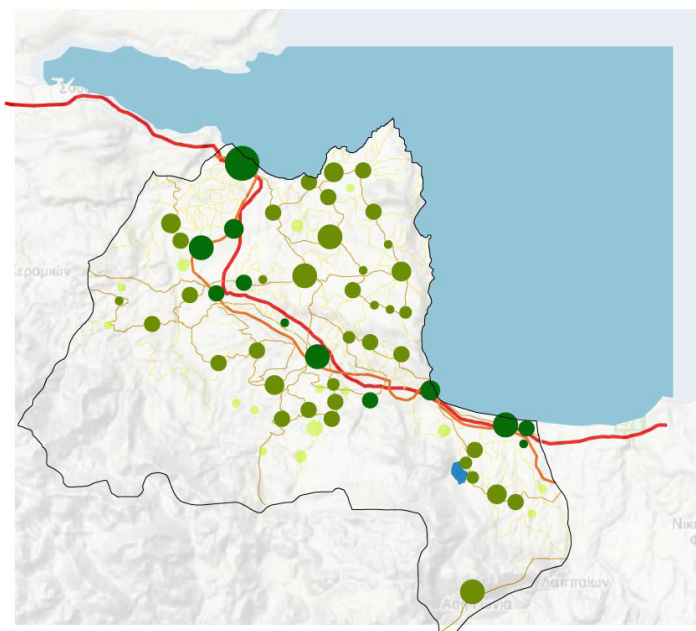


Fig. 97 Proximity to Infrastructure Map  
(source: made by the Author)

- The majority of the urban clusters from all sizes have been developed on plain territory either low or medium altitude and usually are surrounded by agriculture or they are in proximity with the sea.
- Medium and small size clusters are developed on slope or top of the hill having uninterrupted views over the Apokorona landscape

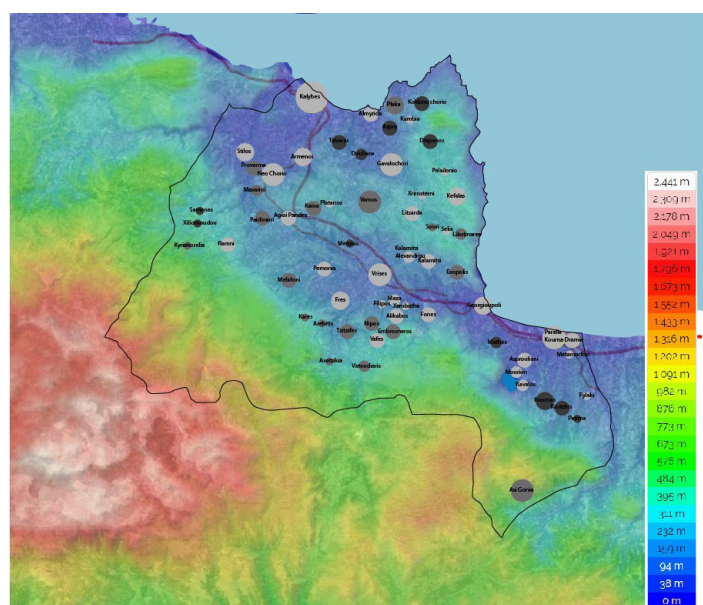


Fig. 98 Natural topography & urban clusters morphology Map  
( source : made by the Author)

- Larger urban clusters are mainly closer to zones with natural asset or in proximity with Highway
- Medium urban clusters are observed near main road network
- Small urban clusters are observed as satellites in between medium clusters or near secondary roads.



Fig.99 Village on top of a hill - Kastelos  
(source : photo by the Author)

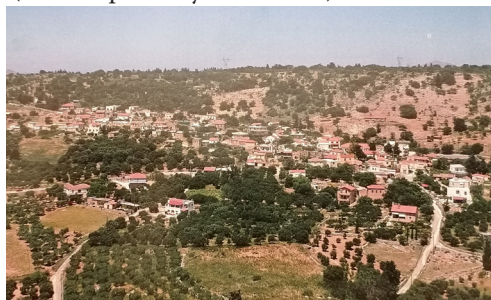


Fig.100 Village on a slope - Kaina  
source : Municipality of Apokoronas)



Fig 101 Village on a plain - Kalamitsi Amygdalou  
(source:photo by the Author)



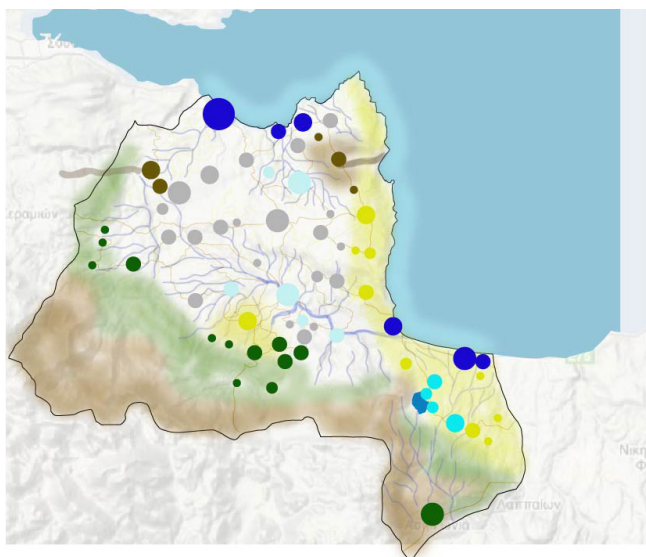


Fig.102 Natural assets Map  
(source : made by the Author)

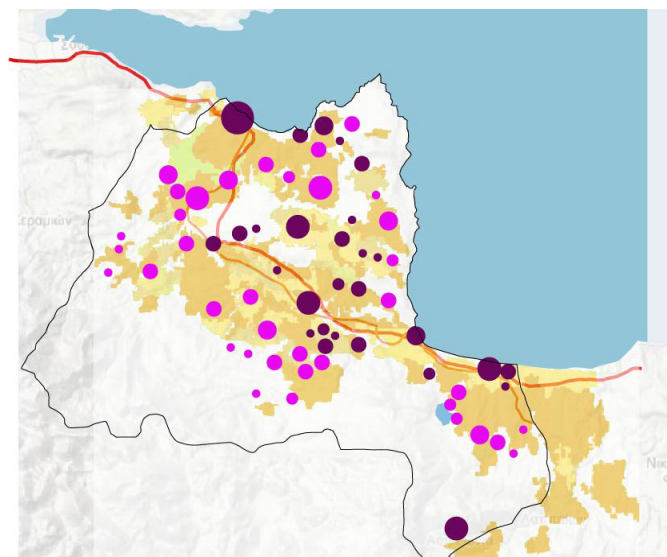


Fig.103 Clusters in proximity to Agriculture Map  
( source : made by the Author)

- The majority of the small and some medium clusters are located either on Natura zone at the East side of the Municipality or near Forest zones at the South at the foothills of the White mountains.  
The Majority of medium and small clusters are located near agricultural areas and the coast. The municipality has not a great range of gorges but is the starting point of the only east-west facing gorge of the island.

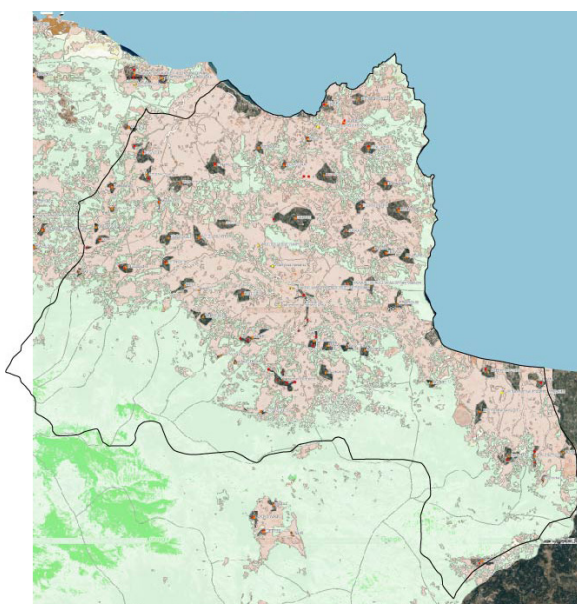


Fig.104 Urban cluster footprint typology map  
( source : made by the Author)

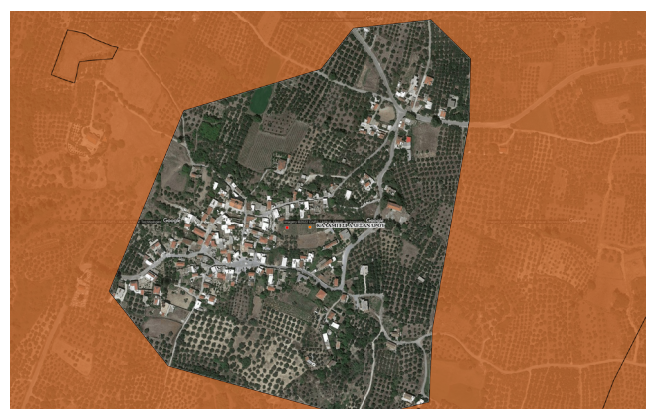


Fig.105 Polycentric urban cluster - Kalamitsi Amygdalou  
(source : Google maps)

- On top of the hill we have only Core and Polycentric urban clusters mainly small and medium size.
- On the plain zones we have all three type of clusters but Core and dispersed are observed on zones close to the sea or small clusters that act as satellites near medium clusters on the primary road network.
- On the slope zones we observe mostly core and polycentric clusters due to the variety of elevation of the territory.
- All three cluster typologies exist in all scales
- The vacant building stock is observed mostly on core and polycentric clusters which are mainly located on the higher altitude zones or near the sea where the phenomenon of the second homes urban sprawl is taking place



Fig.106 Core urban cluster - Vafes  
(source : Google maps)

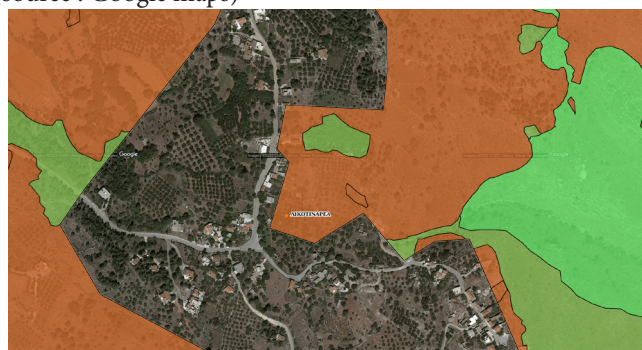


Fig.107 Disperse urban cluster - Likotinarea  
( source : Google maps)



### 3.3b. Identifying Hotspots



Fig.108 Kastelos vacant building stock aerial  
(source : made by the Author on Google map)



Fig.109, 110 & 111 Kastelos village vacant buildings (source : photos taken by the Author)

Kastelos - On top of hill urban cluster with strong core but with almost 30% of the building stock abandoned. Moderate road accessibility. (100-300 population)



Fig.112, 113 & 114 Patima village vacant buildings (source : photos taken by the Author)

Patima - Top of the hill village with abandoned shops and buildings near the church. (0-50 population)



Fig.115 & 116 Kalamitsi Amygdalou village vacant buildings (source : photos taken by the Author)

Kalamitsi Amygdalou - On a slope village with abandoned buildings near the church. Easy road accessibility. (50-100 population)





Fig.117, 118, 119, 120, 121 & 122 Kokkino Chorio village vacant buildings and the only shop (source : photos taken by the Author)

Kokkino Chorio - Abandoned core of the village with two shops only to serve foreigners living in dispersed villas surrounding the village. Abandoned buildings and unused cultural centres have a lot of potential for reuse. Easy road accessibility. (100-300 population)



Fig.123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130 & 126 Kokkino Chorio village vacant buildings restored ones (source : photos taken by the Author)

Kefalas- Polycentric cluster on a plain with rich architecture stock. Signs of restoration in variable parts but have underdeveloped the central square and shops. Easy road accessibility. (300-500 population)





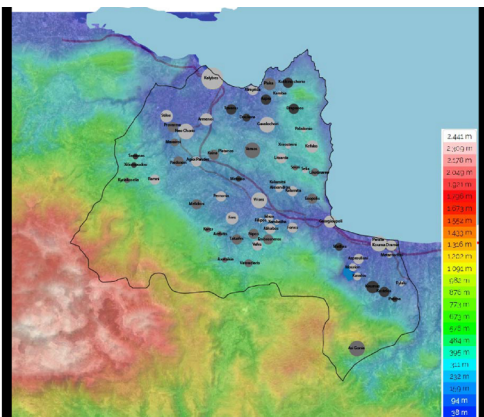
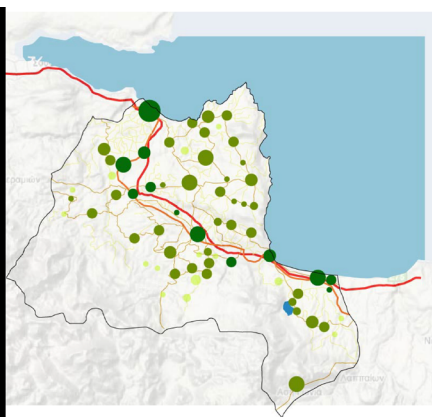
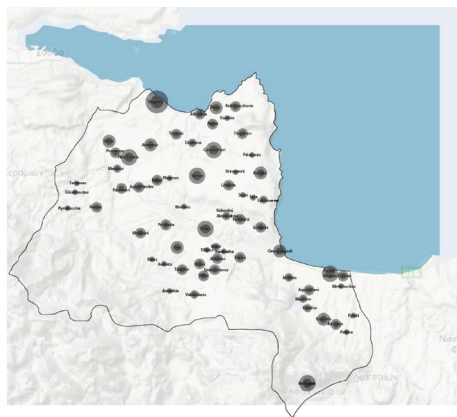
Fig.131, 132, 133, 134, 135 & 136 Aspro village vacant buildings new built luxury residences (source : photos taken by the Author)

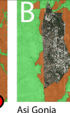



Aspro - A small hill top village which act s as extension of the nearby coastal tourist village of Almyrida. Has only refurbished or newly constructed luxury houses and abandoned buildings. Total absence of public buildings (100-300 population)









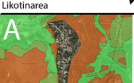



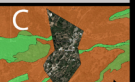













Fig.137, 138, 139, 140 & 141 Exopolis village vacant buildings and abandoned commnity centre (source : photos taken by the Author)

Exopoli - A small on a slope village with core urban cluster has unused public space and abandoned cultural centre. It borders a newly developed tourist village. Easy road access (100-300 population)

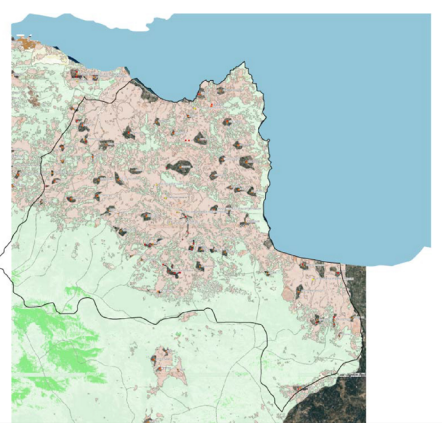
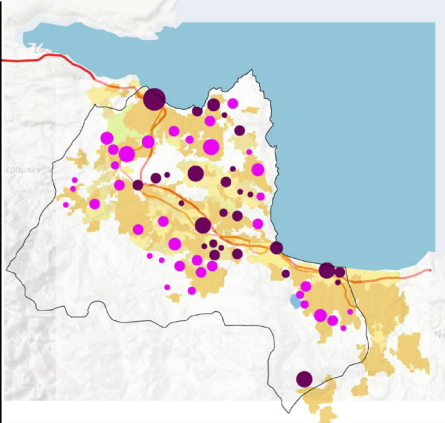
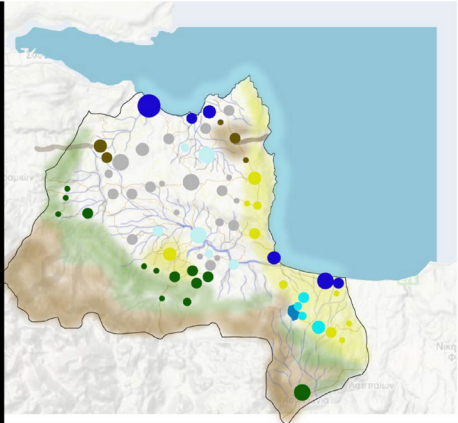





SIZE	CONNECTIONS			TOPOGRAPHY		
census 2011	Near Highway	Near Main Network	Near Rural Network	On a Plain	On a Slope	On Top of a Hill
<b>1000 +</b> Total :1						
 Kalybes	A			A		
<b>500-1000</b> Total : 6						
      Vryses Asi Gonia Galvalochori Neo Chorio Paralia Kourna Varnos	A D E F	B C		A C D E	B F	
<b>300-500</b> Total :7						
      Stylos Kefalas Ammenoi Kournas Fres Plaka	C	A B D E F		A B C E	F	D
 Georgioupoli	A			A		
<b>100-300</b> Total :24						
   Exopolis Asprouliani Aghiol Pandes	C	A B		B C	A	
   Fones Kalamitsi Alikambos	A	B C		A B C		
   Almyrida Embrostheneros Aspro		A B C		A	B C	
   Kalina Kokkino Xorio Litsarda	A	B C		C	A	B
   Provarma Nipos Melidoni		A B C			A B C	
   Ramnol Paldoxori Permonia		A B C		A C	B	
   Tzitzifis Vafes Tsivaras		A C	B	B	A	C
   Drapanos Drama Kastelos	B	A C		B		A C



50-100			Total : 8			
 Douliana	 Maza	 Kalamitsi Alexandrou	B C	A	B C	A
 Likotinareia	 Vatoudiaris	 Kavalos & Mouri	A C	B	C	A B
 Maxairol	 Mathes			A B		A B
0-50			Total : 16			
 Arebitis	 Axetziakia	 Kyriakoselia		A B C		A B C
 Fylaki	 Kambia	 Patima		A B C	A B	C
 Metoxi	 Palailioni	 Sella	A	B C	B C	A
 Platanos	 Samonas	 Xilomoudou		A C	B	A
 Souri	 Xambatha	 Xirosterni		A C	B	B
 Filipos				A	A	A
Total : 62			12	36	14	31
						19
						11





NATURE						AGRICULTURE		URBAN TYPOLOGY		
Gorge	Lake	Forest	Sea	River	Natura Zone	Large Scale	Small Scale	Core 	Disperse 	Polycentric 
			A			A			A	
		B	E	A C		A B C E F	D	A B C F	E	D
A			F		B D E	C F	A B D E	E F	A	B C D
			A			A			A	
	B				A	C	A B	A	B C	
				A		A B C			A C	B
		B	A			A	B C	C	A B	
						A C	B	A B		C
A		B					A B C	B C		A
		A		C			A B C		A	B C
		A B					A B C	B C		A
A			B		C	A B	C	C	A B	

				A B		B C	A	A B		C
	C	B			A		A B C		A B	C
					B	B	A	A	B	
		A B C					A B C		A B C	
B					A C	B	A C	B C		A
B					C	A C	B		A B C	
		B C				A	B C		A C	B
						A B C		A C	B	
						A				A
5	2	12	6	6	10	29	33	22	25	15

Matrix Board made by the author

# CONCLUSION

The Mediterranean being the cradle of western civilisation is a spatial entity which has inspired various scholars, philosophers, politicians, planners, architects and civilians to understand it and categorise it. Categorising a polymorphy which evolves through a constant voyage between several seas with dispersed islands, peninsulas, cities and inland areas and develops a conflictual dialogue between permanent and temporary is a big challenge. This polycentric space is fluid with porous borders where locality and deterritorialization happens simultaneously. The ambiguity of this unstable space is what makes it fertile for constant regeneration. The climate which is the average between the two continents, Africa and Europe, that borders as well as its fragmented young soil became the heart of action and evolution for the people. People who understood that the dyadic transition between the mountains and the sea, from liquid to solid element is the ideal zone to develop communities and urban clusters, where nature creates tension but history manages to mix those elements together.

The Mediterranean can be seen from various perspectives both as a threat and opportunity. Braudel view sees it as one human geographic entity formed by climate, its nomads and long cultural history while Sanule Huntington see it as a divided sea between three religious string canyons, Islam, west civilisation and eastern orthodox. Europe and the globalisation forces want to speed up economic stability but due to all above conflictual realities there is tension, a hard synthesis because the EU cannot see North African states both as an enemy and ally. The Mediterranean once again states its ambiguous character, an intermediate area zone where it can take the role of the mediator and soften up the tensions.

Europe and the European Union is a structure that has been evolving slowly since its creation in the 1950s. The priorities of the Union changed following the global political theatre of each decade as well as the gradient entry of Nation states into the Union. From 1800 to 1945 the Mediterranean has been seen as a "French Lake" of colonial aspirations but post-war Europe led to a post colonial European policy which founded the first Global Mediterranean policy on the table in 1972. That was mainly based on bilateral trade agreements and had nothing to do with unity. Way after the collapse of the Soviet Union the milestone for the Mediterranean was not until 1995 which made it a distinctive entity for the first time after the Roman empire and the Mare Nostrum. For Europe territory still matters but we have to understand that the time when the West in order to self define itself had to do it through other-determination is in the process of change. The dominion relationship that the West has towards the East appears in the Mediterranean as a product formed by the imperial core of Orientalism. We have to consider that if Europe continues to see the Mediterranean as a romantic place of uncontaminated nature and aesthetic and cultural lost world of antiquity will be an issue. The delayed interest of the Union towards the Mediterranean reflects the ongoing challenges that Med and its islands are facing. However the Mediterranean somehow constantly disturbs that picture both on the return of histories that unexpectedly breach the boundaries between past and present as well as the violent resistance to European appropriations of its southern and eastern shores. It is time that Europe turns its focus on the internal sea and enhance its role provoking its presence both as route and bridge becoming a link of heterogeneity as archipelagos between the South and North shores.

The world economic crisis of 2008 has motivated Europe to rethink its values and envision its territory evolution towards 2030 & 2050 based on three scenarios. Scenario A is based on the promotion of European Metropolises which will involve further development of capital and global metropolis. Scenario B is based on the promotion of networking medium cities across the territory such as national and major regional capitals in order to balance polycentric urban systems. Finally scenario C is based on the promotion of small cities and less developed regions. Basically it's a scenario which turns its focus on the countryside and represents more the mosaic of diversity that the European territory consists of, as well as aims to deal with climate change and depopulation phenomenon of the countryside. The EU states that the promotion of any of the three scenarios will have minimal long term effect economic differences. This paper's theme which focuses on the Mediterranean and its islands is inline more with the future scenario C.



The Territorial Cooperation for the future of Europe in 2017 and the State of European Territory in 2019 reports from Espon have categorised the European territory into three zones. lagging and peripheral rural regions, less developed peripheral regions and imitative innovation regions. The evaluation of the territory has been done using NUTS ( Nomenclature of Territorial units for statistics ) as a tool which forms an evaluation map based on geographical subdivision of the territories. As a conclusion, the EU in order to evaluate and provide assistance to less favoured areas of the territory has divided it into Coastal areas, Islands, Rural mountain areas and urban areas. European islands being part of that categorisation have been under consideration and research to understand their insular characteristics. NUTS as an evaluation tool and its 1 to 3 zoning leads to significant disparities and distortions depending on geographical levels. SA a tool discriminates against the smallest region and is not based on homogeneous territories. GDP is an important factor to consider but not the only one as those islands face multiple challenges such as depopulation, internal migration, transport obstacles, seasonality based on tourism, that leads to drop of agriculture and urbanisation of the coast. They have fragile economies and limitations of space and it's very complex to manage those territories which even the rich assets they have such as unique cultural heritage and high environmental qualities can be obstacles to economic development due to lack of territorial space.

What about if those insular limitations are the beacons of seeing those islands as a new topos? An Utopia, a place which has no specific topography but is a place of ( eutopos) eudemonia. That marriage of knowledge and power which form the new topos creates an enormous force which tends to exceed everything and create the supra local. Following Carl Marx's words that he insisted that the new society will emerge from the old, as internal contradictions lead to new development and possibilities. We are now called upon to confront the emergence of differences under the sign of homelessness. This century marks the beginning of revolutions and conflicts between utopian powers, their relationship with place and time is totally negative. It is very important to battle that that the world has to face and the solution might be found in the placeless (me-topo).

This paper argues that the Mediterranean, its largest six islands, have to be seen beyond any ethnocentricity but as a fluid territory which opens up the possibilities of mutual imbrication of "us and "them". All territories are at the same time centre of something and periphery to another, Europe the centre - South Europe its periphery, Mediterranean the centre - Europe, Asia and Middle east its periphery. Mainland the centre, islands the periphery, Islands the centre - the sea their periphery, etc. A multiscale dependency which changes hands but leads to the fact that spatial and power distribution are relative. The covid -19 crisis has brought politicians, scholars and citizens to re-evaluate their lifestyle and positions and bring all under the same umbrella. To feel how it is to be in insular territory. From the other side the digitalisation and remote working initiatives have emerged a new nomad, the digital nomad which even if has been envisioned back in the 1960's this time it's a strong real phenomenon. The vision of the Mediterranean as an archipelago, in this paper, see the digital nomad as a tool which can support the emergence of differences through homelessness and contribute to ( eutopos) eudemonia. The digital nomad is the new Odysseus, a new citizen which maintains the DNA of its ancestors and can act as a connector between the North and south shore of the med in the same way that the Tuareg of the Sahara act between the North and Territorial africa. The difference would be that this new nomad has an identity which no longer is organised around the privileged voice and stable subjectivity of the external observer but is broken down in a movement that no longer permits the obvious institution between thought and reality. He has a personality that can surpass geographical and ideological limits. He acts fast, efficiently and demonstrates physical strength as well as uses his sensory tools to be more critical and act as a de-territorialised tribe.

Some European countries and particularly the ones examined in this paper such as Italy, France, Spain, Greece and Cyprus have raised concerns regarding the depopulation of their countryside. Spain, Italy and France are the pioneers, they declared zones that need immediate attention and formed synergies and commissions between various territorial scales to tackle the phenomenon. SNAI ( National strategy of inner areas) of Italy, Empty Spain (Espana Vacía) and French Third Place in France are some of them. Greece and Cyprus have not officially created any initiatives towards that direction but they have demonstrated their interest. From the other side Covid-19 brought through remote working the return to the countryside, we do not know if that is going to be established but we should look back in history that important events like the Industrial revolution or Post WWI economic problems brought attracted people in the cities. Post-Covid 19 era might be just about to start the opposite.

The largest six islands of the Mediterranean, Sicily, Sardegna, Corsica, Crete and Mallorca are sovereign part of those states but at the same time have variable administrative characteristics. In this paper there has been a selection of one zone on each island. Some of those zones are part of the territory that national strategies of repopulation are considered but beyond that they also express the sense of place of each island beyond their island space. The zone selection aims to represent a common ground base between those islands on both practical and metaphorical terms. The practical issues of Accessibility, Topographical characteristics and Demographic declines are addressed while the metaphorical issues are in relation with their Spatial, Political, Mental, Economic Infrastructure and Urban identity. An archipelago which covers all the human aspects of life and existence. Those zones are proposed as areas of further investigation for repopulation activities reinforced by the new citizen.

The paper demonstrates five individual repopulation initiatives that took place in Europe. Those initiatives represent a voyage through all scales of governance from European & National to the single citizen. From one man initiative such as the case of Solanell village in the Spanish Pyrenees, the private company and start initiatives in Villahoz and Arvieu to the Mayor initiative in Stile / Riace and the Government initiative in Punta do sol and Cozzano. All initiatives are a result of a vision which has a slow process, faced variable constraints but eventually proved successful. A bottom up and top-down initiative process that comes along the concept of archipelagos, centre of something and periphery of another.

The Municipality of Apokoronas in Crete is used as a zoom-in case study where all 62 villages of the municipality are organised and categorised in a matrix according to population, size, urban cluster typology, natural assets, accessibility and agriculture. It has been revealed a variety of urban clusters which all have similar problems of seasonality, depopulation and unused building stock. Zooming more into some villages the survey of abandoned and declined buildings in the right centre of those villages from one side reveals the lack of interest through the years of revitalising those places but from the other side shows the territory of opportunities. A fertile hotspot where the new citizens can be allocated and evolve in similar initiative ways as individual case studies have been shown through the research.

The entire research attempted to view the subject through a multiscale approach on European, National, Regional, Local and Individual level as well as through three directives; Theoretical, Institutional and Practical. There has not been in depth analysis on one specific parameter or scale but rather the focus aimed to highlight the importance of thinking simultaneously on an array of spatial and institutional scales might prove more effective to show directions for further research. The vision is to understand possible synergies that can evolve in a complexity of scales varying from Hotspots in Urban Cluster / Apokoronas urban clusters, Individual island's zone collaboration to the Six largest island Spine. The aim is to enlighten a vision and flirt with the idea of creation a beyond borders Island Federation Archipelago. This porous entity, maybe an Utopia which has right at its epi-centre a citizen of high self-consciousness which returns to the countryside and its more than ever connected to the real human nature, the one of the prehistoric hunter. He regains this nostalgic loss of primitive communal spirit where the collective "we" have been diminished under the egoistic "I". A citizen which comes inline with a community of islands that are not acting as individualities but as a unity that impose itself in the centre of an hierarchical entity, simultaneously actors of local and global dimensions, the Mediterranean.



Fig. 142  
The Mediterranean and its islands at the centre of the World. Orbis Terrarum map by Roman Emperor Augustus





Fig. 143  
The Mediterranean  
without borders map  
(source : made by  
Sabine Rethore)



# THE ISLAND FEDERATION ARCHIPELAGO MANIFESTO

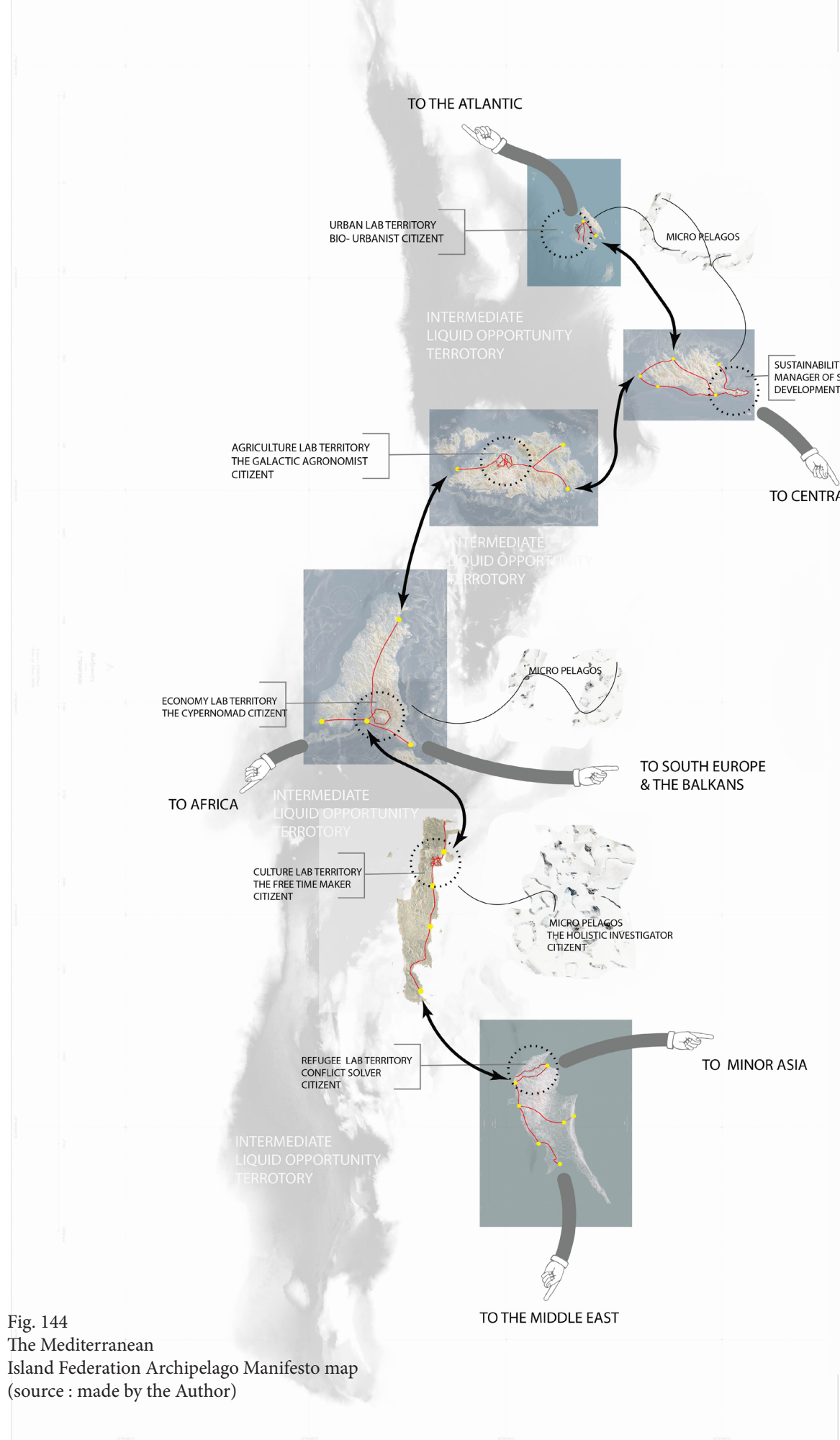


Fig. 144  
The Mediterranean  
Island Federation Archipelago Manifesto map  
(source : made by the Author)

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