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Zagori Traditional Settlements, 1940 to Date

The topic of this article focuses on the Zagori area, in the region of Epirus, in Northwestern Greece. The study of Traditional Settlements is of particular importance, as their development depends both on the past, as well as in the present, and on the prevailing societal trends relating to their survival, and evolution, either into thriving tourist attractions, or traditional living history museums.

This paper introduces Zagori, from the Second World War, and up to this day, and analyses through digital maps, and by using GIS technology, the results of spatial indicators, such as population changes per ten years, employment and unemployment rate, indicator of population ageing, percentage of new buildings, etc., describing the socioeconomic dimension in the study area, with regard to its sustainable development and social cohesion. An enterprise survey, consisting of twenty-seven (27) closed and open questions, has been conducted with one hundred employer questionnaires, aiming to collect as much information as possible about businesses operating in the study area. Our aim has been to understand why traditional settlements either remain unchanged over time and grow, or simply turn into museum remnants of the past, without social life and economic activity.

The results showcase the anthropogeography to be weakened, aged and small. A negative balance of economic activities does not allow the inhabitants of the settlements to develop agro-tourism, or other agricultural activities (Zagori is famous for their unbelievable natural beauty, its unique architecture and long history).

Keyword: Settlement, Traditionality, Zagori, Monuments, Urban Geography.

Introduction

This paper explores the anthropogeographic evolution of traditional settlements during the last seventy years, with its research focus lying in the area of Zagorohoria, at the prefecture of Ioannina.

The study of traditional settlements has a distinctive character, as it examines the settlements' dual dependence, both in the past and in the present. Societies should acknowledge such cases owing to their importance as historical presences and their continuity and survival in the passing of time similar to living organisms.

The purpose of this article is to initially record both the legal framework governing the particular type of settlements, as well as to explore the mechanisms which facilitate the viability of the traditional settlements during their transition from the traditional regime to modern reality, in the region of Zagori. This research stands as a meaningful reference to the habitable buildings of the area, that are alive and thrive while others are under threat or abandonment. As it is understood, under the same framework the settlements are explored as symbolic and cultural concepts with regards to architecture and urban planning.

Conclusions shall be drawn on the geographical dimension (based on the population, morphology, the location and the dependence of these settlements on large urban centers-

cities) of these traditional settlements as well as on the uses of the buildings found in these areas.

All of the above were explored in view of the integration of this particular type of settlements in the area. The research also examines how these also constitute attraction poles, contributing to the development and competitiveness of the wider region (administrative region and prefecture) in which they belong (Planel-Marchand 1981).

Framework for the Protection of Traditional Settlements

In Greece, the promotion of the cultural value of traditional settlements began in the mid-20th century. Yet, the first legal step was taken with the institutionalization of the General Construction Regulation, in 1973. Subsequently, the 1975 Revised Constitution of Greece and its Article no. 24 (para. 6) states that "*Monuments, traditional regions and elements are protected by the State*". Later, with the addition of legal regulations, constructions were further restricted in the specific settlements. In 1985, an amendment to the General Construction Regulation ensured the preservation and promotion to their particular historical, urbane, architectural, folkloric, social and aesthetic physiognomy. In 1992, the Granada Convention was legally sanctioned to preserve and promote the ideals and principles of architectural heritage (monuments, architectural ensembles, places).

Moreover, the Greek Council of State (GCS) has played an important role in the protection of traditional settlements, not only in the exercise of its annulment power, but also during the process of drafting Presidential Decrees. The Council of State has developed established principles and positions in the exercise of its jurisdiction, aiming at the most effective protection of this kind of settlements. The Greek Council of State also assumed the role of these traditional settlements' guardian after the introduction of relevant case law developed while resolving disputes between the administration and citizens.

As a result, over the years, the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties, as well as other European directives have been successfully incorporated into national legislation and in order to make up for the legislative void of the 1975 Constitution.

Field Research Methodology

This present work, as already mentioned, focuses on the complex of traditional settlements in the Zagorohoria area. Zagori is located northeast of the city of Ioannina. It consists of 46 villages, the famous Zagorohoria, with a total area of approximately 990 km² which are scattered at the foot of Pindos (Sikas, 2007).

The majority of the settlements have been characterized as traditional and constitute 77% of all the traditional settlements of the prefecture of Ioannina. 50% of the total area of the Northern Pindos National Park is located in the Zagori area. Owing to its rich natural and cultural heritage, Zagori has transformed into a pole of attraction for visitors of various forms of tourism, thus making it a lever of economic development and prosperity for the wider region, as well as for the prefecture itself (Sidiropoulos and Giotis, 2012).

For a better and more effective understanding of the prevailing conditions in the region, a questionnaire was drawn up concerning the registered businesses in the region. The selection of the businesses was made by the Chamber of Ioannina Archives from which the

businesses of the region and the data from the Municipality of Zagori were recorded. It consists of 27 closed-ended and open-ended questions.

The open-ended questions give the interviewed entrepreneur the opportunity to express his/her views on issues related to the promotion of his/her business but also the image of the settlement in relation to the past as well as its preserved traditional element. The closed-ended questions have predefined responses that help us better identify the key elements of our research.

The Structure of the Questionnaire covered the following sections: Basic demographics, infrastructure networks and service methods, business characteristics and Employment, long-term evolution of the traditional Settlement. The sampling method applied was quota sampling (Stathakopoulos, 1997).

Initially, using the data from the business register that comprise the population of the survey, their spatial distribution was estimated in the sub-regions of Zagorohoria. Then, on the basis of the stratification of the sub-area (settlement) in which the business was founded, 17 strata were created, namely: 15 businesses in Megalo Papigo, 14 in Monodendri, 11 in Aristi, 9 in Tsepelovo, 8 in Ano Pedina and Asprageli, 7 in Dilofo, 6 in Kipi, 5 in Vitsa, 4 in Kapesovo, 2 in Vovousa and one business in Skamneli, Koukouli and Greveniti. The selection of the number of businesses was done in such a way so that the research sample created was proportional to the gravity of the particular stratum in total.

Furthermore, primary data were used, originally produced by the Hellenic Statistical Authority. These data formed indicators (population change per decade, employment by sector, unemployment, etc.), which are represented graphically through digital thematic maps using a geographic information system.

Regarding the problems that arose during the survey, we must mention that during the inventories that took place between 1940 and 1991, no records related to economic data in terms of settlement were collected (Sidiropoulos and Giotis, 2012).

Several of the settlements that appear in the 1940, 1951 and 1961 research, do not exist today either because they merged with other settlements and thus were renamed or are no longer habitable, resulting in difficulties in finding and sharing statistical data, but also regarding the reconstitution of geographic information (Giotis, 2011).

Finally, it should be noted that during the completion of the questionnaires (via an electronic platform), we faced the respondents' mistrust (only twenty out of a hundred replied), as they considered that the whole survey might conceal other purposes. For this reason, our daily presence was required for a period of approximately two months.

Data Analysis - Analysis of questionnaire results

Based on the analysis of the demographic results and the sample of the 100 professionals who responded, it is shown that the vast majority of them (93%) are above the age of 30, while the rest are between the age of 18 and 30. Of these, 74 are married. Regarding their level of education, half of them are graduates of higher education (that includes university graduates, postgraduate or doctoral degree holders), 41% are graduates of secondary education and the remaining 9% have a basic education.

Regarding the place of origin of the respondents, the most popular answers were: 45% of them are from Ioannina, 6% from Athens, 6% from Tsepelovo, 5% from Monodendri and 4% from Thessaloniki.

Approximately 2/3 of the respondents stated that their place of residence coincides with the place of their business, while the remaining 38% replied that it did not match. However, it should be noted that the majority of the respondents (86%) residing in a different place from the location of their business, reside in the region of Epirus, at the center of the research area, while the remaining 8% reside in Thessaloniki and 6% reside in Athens.

In regard to the infrastructure section, the survey participants were asked to assess the basic infrastructure of the area, such as the road network and the Internet services. These infrastructure choices were made as they were considered to be the most representative of how businesses in the region connect and communicate with the rest of the world. Approximately 2/3 of the respondents (64%) said the existing road infrastructure is moderate, 23% said it is good and only 13% described it as bad. About half of the respondents suggested that the Internet services are moderate, about one third said they are good, and less than 20% rated them as bad.

With regards to the employment questionnaire, 49% of the respondents said they are employed in a second job other than their main one, while the remaining 51% said they are employed exclusively in their business. In the nature of the second job, 28% of respondents said they are farmers, 23% are beekeepers, 21% are freelancers who are mainly engaged in timber trading, and only 3% are civil servants, who obviously do not officially appear as the owners of the business.

In relation to the business, the majority of them have branched out. The results show that a significant number of businesses are not limited to one activity but they are active in more sectors: 33% operate as hotel accommodations, 23% are hostels, 13% are restaurants, 15% are enterprises that combine accommodation and catering services, 6% deals with tourist products and 2% provide services in outdoor activities.

Most businesses were established during 2000-2009, as 64 were established during the period between the two European funding programs (2000-2006 & 2007-2013), most of them being set up in 2009. 22 companies were established during 1990-1999. Only 3 were founded during 1980-1989. In the current decade, 10 businesses have already been established, a rather satisfactory number considering the economic crisis that the country has been experiencing.

Respondents were then asked to answer whether or not they are employed in their business. This question is indicative of both the economic size of the businesses and the possible diffusion of beneficial effects on employment rates in the research. Businesses are mainly owned by their owners (along with their family members), as only 4 out of 10 companies employ workers. For enterprises employing staff—with majority of them (70%) employing between 1 and 3, answers were given regarding the number of employees, whether they are seasonal or permanent (80% of them are employed annually), the place of their residence, and if they hire Greek or foreign employees, and why they choose foreigners.

Concerning the nationality of employees, 13% of employers employ foreigners, 64% employ Greeks and 23% employ both foreigners and Greeks. 51% of the workers live in Zagori and 49% live in the prefecture of Ioannina.

In the last section, the preservation of the tradition of each settlement in Zagori was investigated in relation to the development and tourist promotion of the area. Regarding whether the entrepreneurs are satisfied with the current image of the settlement, 2/3 of them said they are satisfied. In response to the question as to whether the settlement has retained its traditional characteristics, the respondents seem to have a positive opinion, as

half of them stated that the degree of tradition is very high, 43% of them stated that they are quite satisfied and only 9% said that their settlement preserves its traditional character to a small extent.

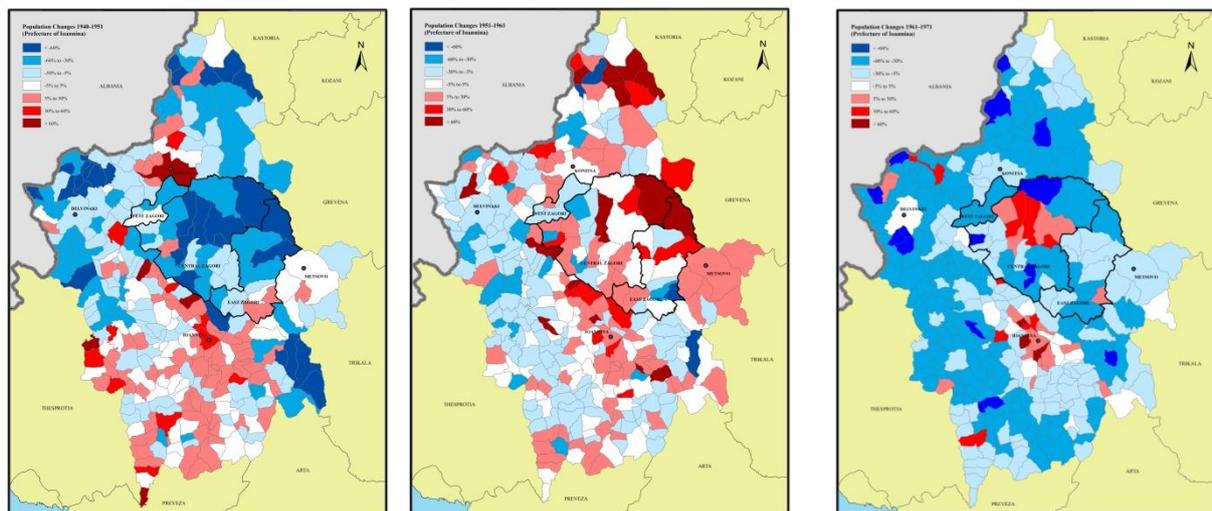
As for the settlements considered to be the most developed, regardless of the location where each respondent is located, Monodendri (93%) and Megalo Papigo (90%) are considered to be the most developed settlements in these areas. 57% of the respondents described Aristi as a developed settlement with Kipi (37%) and Tsepelovo (37%) to follow. In contrast, there were an extremely low percentage of respondents who opted for Coucouli (1%), Dikorfo (1%), Skamneli (2%), Vikos (3%) and Asprangeli (3%). The most important factors that attract visitors to the area where the businesses operate are the landscape (89%), the traditional character of the settlements (84%) and the services provided (80%). On the contrary, the geographical location (4%) and the purchase of traditional local products (7%) appear to be the least important factors.

Data Analysis - Analysis of Changes in Zagorochoria

According to the 2011 census data, the inhabitants of Zagori's geographical unit were 3.740, i.e. 2.292 less than those recorded in the 2001 census (6.032).

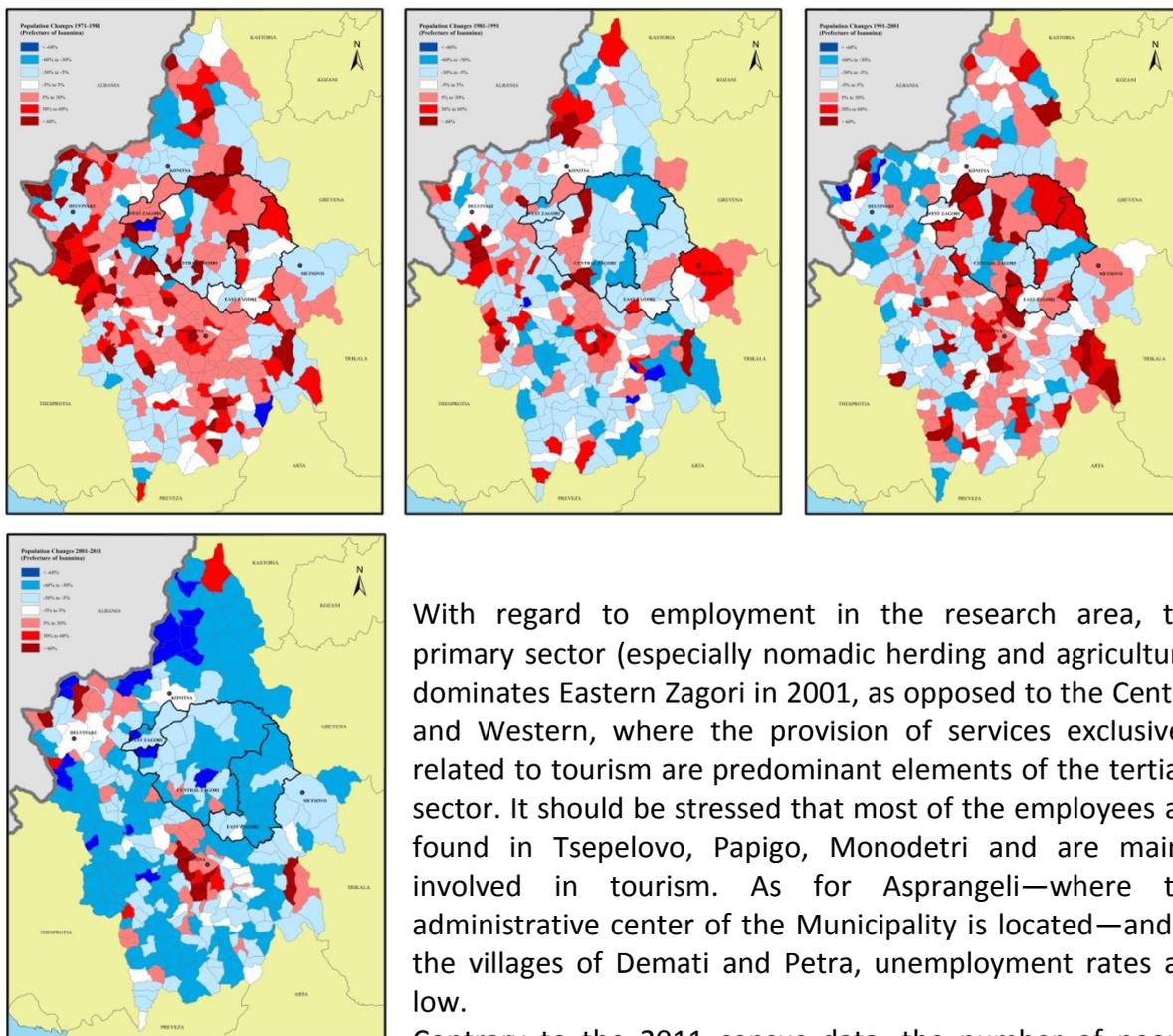
Years	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
People	14884	9128	9599	6989	6220	5540	6032	3740

Based on the mapping of the demographic data by settlement, from 1940 to 2011, safe conclusions are drawn regarding the population change and the trends that prevailed per decade in both Zagorochoria and the prefecture of Ioannina. Thus, in the first decade of the survey (1940-51), there is a significant decrease of the population (63%) due to the fact that the area was a field of conflict during the Greek-Italian and Civil War, but also due to its being barren and mountainous (inaccessible). In the following decade (1951-1961), we have a small population growth of 5% (population growth is approximately 1% in the prefecture), which occurs mainly in Central and Eastern Zagori. In the next decade, the large migratory current, which prevails in almost all of Greece, causes a significant reduction of 27%, twice the decrease recorded in the whole prefecture (13%). During the period in question, almost all of the settlements show a decrease (the largest in Demathi, Vrysochori, Mesovouni) except for the settlements of Iliochori, Skamneli, Vradeto and Tsepelovo, which are located in the center of the research area, thus attracting the population that has not immigrated.



In the next two decades, the decline of the population continues steadily by 11% (1971-1981) and 12% (1981-1991) respectively, although at the prefecture level the population growth is 9.5% and 7.5% respectively. From 1991 to 2001, the region's population grew by 8%, reaching an equivalent number of growth with that of the prefecture. The majority of settlements in all three subdivisions (Western, Eastern, and Central Zagori) have a positive growth rate. This increase stems mainly from the major role of the city of Ioannina as a pole of attraction and its growing influence in Epirus and the wider region of Northwestern Greece. We should also take into consideration the large immigration trend (legal and illegal) from various regions of the neighboring Albania that floods the prefecture. Part of the immigrants still remains in the area and deals with the reconstruction and maintenance of a large number of traditional buildings.

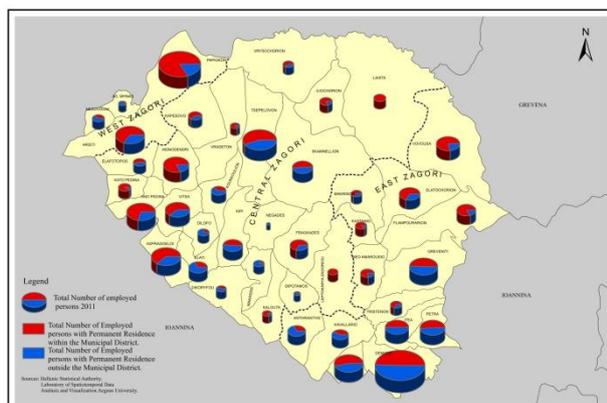
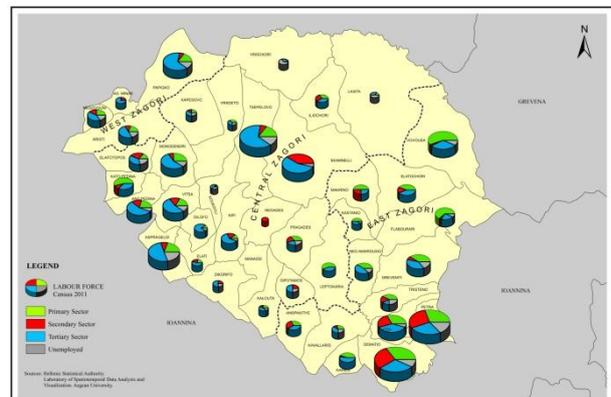
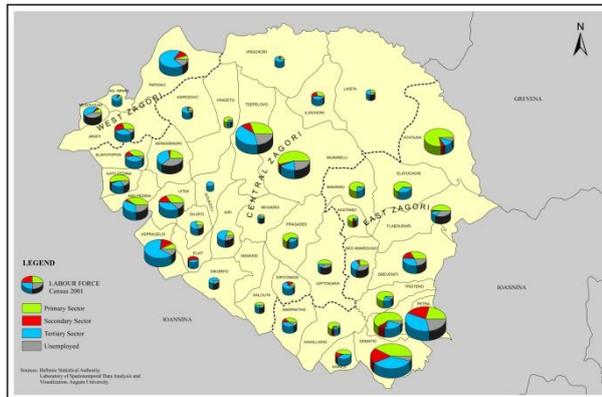
Finally, in the last decade (2001-2011), the population has dropped by 38% (only Monodendri and Ano Pedina have a positive growth rate), whereas in the prefecture we have an increase of 10%. This is mainly the case due to two factors: firstly, the large number of workers in the area living in the city of Ioannina (which facilitates a satisfactory standard of living) and those people's moving daily to the areas of Zagori. Secondly, the incomplete infrastructure of the area forced part of the population to relocate to other places (e.g. Metsovo), its distance from Zagoria having significantly decreased following the creation of a modern and integrated road network in the prefecture of Ioannina.



With regard to employment in the research area, the primary sector (especially nomadic herding and agriculture) dominates Eastern Zagori in 2001, as opposed to the Central and Western, where the provision of services exclusively related to tourism are predominant elements of the tertiary sector. It should be stressed that most of the employees are found in Tsepelovo, Papigo, Monodetri and are mainly involved in tourism. As for Asprangeli—where the administrative center of the Municipality is located—and in the villages of Demati and Petra, unemployment rates are low.

Contrary to the 2011 census data, the number of people

employed in the primary sector appears to have significantly reduced, while employees in the tertiary sector are increasing. Unemployment rates have further declined, while the secondary sector remains stable. This progress is also due to the fact that, during the decade 2001-2010, a large number of hotel units and lodgings were created, resulting in a shift of the workforce from one category to another.



Finally, it should be noted that in the settlements of Western and Central Zagori, the majority of the employees reside in their place of work in contrast to Eastern Zagori, where there is a balance between those living close to their workplace and those residing in other settlements in the region or in nearby towns.

Conclusions

The area of Zagorohoria highlights a deficient framework at the level of population geography where the population appears weakened and small in number. At the level of economic activity, the balance appears to be negative, with a predominant employment trend in the tertiary sector, thus not the meeting the needs of each community. At the same time, the maintenance of the housing is observed, constituting an important factor for the preservation of urban heritage. This morphologically significant peculiarity (architectural heritage) has been the result of a balanced development of the settlements' social and economic life over time. The gradual depopulation and the minimization of economic activity have drastically reduced progress, leaving almost intact, however, the architectural heritage, which has largely re-emerged today through tourism.

The above conclusions are validated to a large extent by the responses given by the entrepreneurs working in the research area. In addition, the questionnaire focused on the recording of the live diachronic image as transmitted by the people living and working in the area in connection with the preservation of each settlement's traditional character. Thanks to the open-ended questions selected, the participants were given the opportunity to

express their opinion freely about the elements that make a settlement attractive to visitors, while retaining its traditional elements.

The aforementioned considerations are reasonable enough to guide us to a wider reflection regarding all the traditional settlements, their sustainability and continuity. As seen, their sustainability is connected to the utilization of the traditional architectural wealth that requires sufficient investments, as well as an activation of a general development plan aimed at all aspects of the settlements' lives and not just their architectural heritage.

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