

Coexistence of two forms of local embeddedness at a regional scale - Corsican Citrus between traditional production and a specialized cluster

The Corsican Citrus sector constitutes a cluster localized in the East of Corsica, structuring specialized farmers, commercial agents and scientists. It is based on the export of fresh fruits - clementine and grapefruit - under Geographical Indication (GI) to continental France. Long before the development of this eastern cluster (EC), production of Citruses has been part of the island's history, leading to the current existence of small orchards of oranges, lemons and citrons scattered all over the island's coasts. We intend to describe them and to understand to what extent they coexist with the EC. Our explorative work is based on qualitative interviews with local experts (localized in the EC) and stakeholders involved in the development of citrus outside of the EC (artisans, farmers and local organizations).

Citrus' production out of the EC is minor, counting little volume, gathering few producers and artisans, but it is symbolic as it enhances aspects of the inhabitants' life and connection to place. It reconnects with the island's glorious past, the eighteenth century, when its landscape was compared to a multicolor garden of diverse trees (almonds, chestnuts, citruses...); it is associated with ecofriendly farming practices (notably through the organic label), and more human commercial practices; it relies on a diversity of products, fresh fruits, processed food (jam, candied fruits) and cosmetics; it is associated with projects thought to valorize abandoned spaces for villagers' sake. However, all those initiatives are scattered and individuals don't know much about each other. For most of the interviewees, growing their activity is difficult as knowledge, professional organizations and resources (production of seeds and trees, specialized stores for citrus farming, public subsidies) are concentrated in the EC.

Our results give insights of how different forms of place-based activities co-exist in a same region and enlighten differently a same process such as local embeddedness, between a specialized sector structured by GIs (mainly oriented by export) and scattered diverse and fragile initiatives rooted into local history and part of the heritage of local communities. Both forms of embeddedness nourish and question each other. Tensions and competition are noticeable as the EC condenses knowledge and resources leading operators of the rest of the island to be marginalized. However, their existence raises questions about the way stakeholders of the EC could be more place-based. Territorial stakes are to turn this competition into complementarity and to make room for those different forms of local embeddedness and matching development.

Main organizers



Co-organizers

