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Laboratory Life: Twenty Years of Experimental Research with Locals and New Comers in Remote Rural Areas

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ABSTRACT

Through the Latour concept of philosophy of science of laboratory life, the life course of a (geo) ethnographer researcher is analyzed, in order to establish the emotional or more personal dimensions that do not usually appear in research papers, but that have notable relevance in qualitative research. The text is structured in three large parts: A conceptual vision of the new experimental geography; the experimental geo-ethnography in old social, new social and place scenarios; and finally, the most personal and emotional dimension of the research. The first part establishes the geo-ethnographic experimental context and the assumptions in fieldwork, in addition to the geo-ethnographic reconciliation process. In the second part, the main qualitative research problems related to mobility, resistance and dynamics in place are established. Finally, in the third part the research perceptions, the personal experiences, and the emotional dimension of the research in remote rural areas are established. The laboratory life of a researcher, allows one to establish scalar conclusions and rigor in qualitative research.

Keywords: Laboratory life; Qualitative research; Rural areas; Social change; Experimental research

1. Introduction

From the Latour concept of laboratory life ^[1], the dimensions of the life course of a qualitative geographer are revised in this contribution. The debate on the rigor of qualitative methodology has a certain

tradition in human geography ^[2-4], based on the lack of transparency of qualitative research about the research process in aspects such as the absence of verification by other research, the variable and scattered nature of the qualitative data, the subjectivity in the selection of informants in fieldwork ^[5]. As Baxter

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and Eyles^[6] suggest, there is a permanent tension between the creativity of the qualitative research process and the evaluation or verification. Context, contingency and the specific positions in/of subjects are central to qualitative inquiry and should not be considered to establish scientific rigor^[6]. Consequently, rigor in qualitative methodology should not be interpreted in the same way as in quantitative approaches. One possibility to increase “rigour” is through sharing and “reusing each other data”^[5]. In this way, we can extract great value with the sum of original qualitative data, in a long-term research strategy that allows meta-synthesis to be generated^[5]. As suggested by Wimark, Lewis, Caretta^[7], “the life events and transitions that intersect with fieldwork have been largely absent from these discussions”.

In this paper it was argued that the life course of a researcher and a study subject is a way to increase the scalar dimension of qualitative visions of the research. As suggested by Latour: The idea of an ethnographic study of scientific practice has given rise to a body of work which comes to be called “laboratory studies”^[1]. Laboratory life is a life dedicated to the qualitative research of a subject expressed in a geographical manner: “The life courses of researchers and participants are therefore not only linked temporarily or professionally in specific field sites”^[8].

In the context of the last research tendencies in human and rural geography associated with the encounters and assemblages of heterogeneous, fluid and hybrid socio-spatial realities suggested by Massey, Murdoch, Leitner or Willet^[9-12] between other academics, the main parts of this paper are: (1) Experimental life course in depopulated areas, some theoretical considerations in the context of human and rural post-modern geographies. (2) Social change in depopulated areas: Old social, new social and place dimensions. (3) Researcher and life experienced in depopulated areas: Perceptions, daily and events experiences, life and emotions. It’s a summary of my research life in marginal areas between the years 2000 to 2020, close recently.

2. Experimental (geo) ethnography

The academic context of experimental geo-ethnography is based on three dimensions: (1) post-modern experimental geography: Deconstructing the binary relation research-researcher and creating new binary synthesis^[13]. Our binary worlds are in constant flux where the fieldwork context and experiences and life course have a reciprocal influence. (2) Experiment with others and imaginative geographies: “One part of the most significant contributions of postmodernism is supposed to be its attention to ‘multiple voices’, to the dangers and universalising a particular point of view, but in many cases ...”^[14]. This trend suggests a particular point of view of the research in the selection of participants. (3) Imaginative and reflexive geographies: “By reflexivity we mean to refer to the realization that observers of scientific activity are engaged in methods which are essentially similar to those of the practitioners which they study”^[1].

The assumptions in fieldwork, are mainly: (1) Multiple popular voices in the qualitative research; (2) (management of) other discourses in the margins of the community; (3) progressive (domestication of) differences between people in the development of qualitative fieldwork^[14], in a close rural community.

2.1 Experimental life course

The Initial assumptions of the experimental life course are mainly: (A) “Insider of complete member research”^[15] as the sum of: (1) personal narrative experience; (2) narrative as encounter/dialogue; (3) below as political/subaltern^[15] in marginal and small-scale situations. (B) “Extensive research cannot establish causation, only intensive research—focusing on individual cases—using qualitative methods”^[13]. (C) Human geographic fieldwork is essentially a dynamic confluence of three life courses: Researcher, participant and place^[8].

The life course is a theoretical orientation dedicated to the study of the lives of people based on the micro experience of individuals in a specific socio-geographical context commonly used in so-

cial studies ^[16-20] and in human and social geography in the last twenty years in fields of study such as race, culture, migration, reproduction and locational choice ^[7]. On the contrary, an experimental researcher's life course is the account of an extended period of time dedicated to the qualitative analysis of the same subject/object of study by a researcher with few references in the literature ^[21] or non-existent in long periods of time. This account includes responses and emotional changes of the researcher in the continuous process of fieldwork, in this sense personal knowledge or personal oral history is used as research material. The experimental life course of a researcher is not an auto-ethnography or an autobiography ^[22,15], since it aims to situate the researcher's experience in successive research scenarios throughout professional life. Personal experiences in a place situated in larger processes of research are a scalar factor for increasing the results and the power of scientific conclusions of qualitative methodology. As Wimark, Lewis and Caretta ^[7] suggest: "The life course framework asserts that social and professional lives are affected by geographically situated and temporality contingent norms and institutions".

The experimental life of a researcher, suggest two main considerations: (1) Experimental situates the (lives of) researcher in (successive) research setting or places. "Experimental gained which immerses in the day-to-day activities of working scientists" ^[1]. (2) Experimental form of representation, "not conventional" is usually associated with (auto) ethnographical approach in the context of one research. One life is the sum of multiple experimental (successive

experiences) forms of representation in a specific research subject. Research lives with multiple roles and emotions (**Figures 1 and 2**).

The process of reconciliation (of research and researcher) suggests two main sides: emotions and qualitative research and emotions and personal-professional life. (1) Emotions and research: Mainly based on the co-evolution of the researcher's life course and the fieldwork. There are few studies on the influence of life events in the fieldwork ^[7], or how fieldwork can impact life course ^[23]. In the extensive "in time" process of qualitative fieldwork the researcher can/must reconcile their professional interests and their personal aspirations.

(2) Emotions and life: Variable emotional exchanges associated with each fieldwork ^[8], in a permanent and cumulative process. Emotions influence the approach of fieldwork over an extensive time. Changes in the sense and intensity of emotions with life course is a relevant consideration in the extensive fieldwork: "The field is not only a geographical location but rather a set of relationships nurtured, contested and developed during the course of long fieldwork phases" ^[24].

The life course has two major interpretations: (1) Approach (continuity) or (2) derive or secondary method (segmented/sum) (**Figures 1 and 2**), with successive turning points in the life course and research life. Each new fieldwork research field and personal life defines a new encounter that opens through turning points, which can have a scalar dimension in an extensive life course.

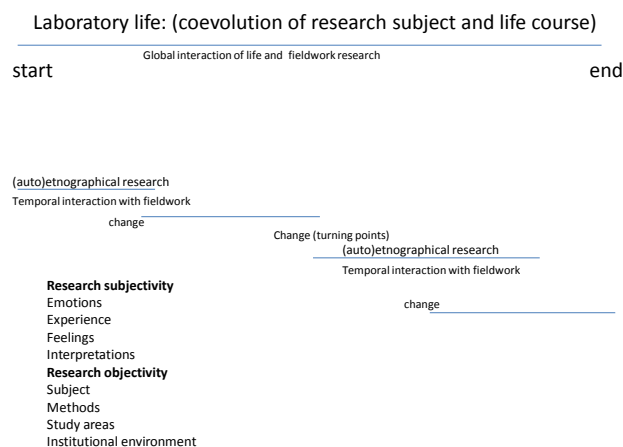


Figure 1. Modalities of life course research.

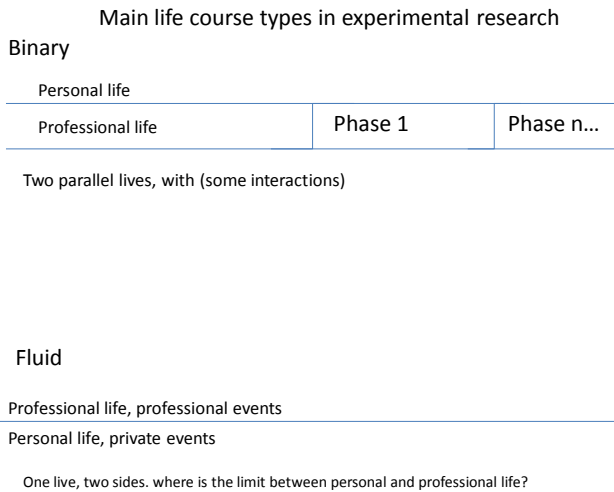


Figure 2. Main life course types in experimental research.

2.2 Experimental research in marginal and depopulated areas

The experimental research suggests two complementary perspectives or encounters: (1) From depopulated area: (a) Multiple (but few) particular voices (in the making) of research. (b) (Key) Moral situations in the field: The relevance of selection of events or places and social micro processes. The field is open to offers for possible ways of research fieldwork, but the decision of the final route is on the side of the researcher... (2) From research/cher: Experiment with my own perspective (between few others), or in others words: Few others in depopulated and marginal areas and the other researcher between others in a close experimental relationship.

This perspective suggests a route from the coproduction of research to the coproduction of research: The gradual adaptation of the researcher point of view to participants. This research context acquires remarkable relevance to the positionality of researchers that has diverse perspectives in human geography in the last twenty years: ethical, cultural, gender, and place studies [16-19]. In the experimental life course there are successive changes in the positionality of a researcher's in the depopulated area with two sides: (1) Auto positionality (self-narrative). Emotions alter the positionality of the researcher in the course of research or successive research. (2) Context position-

ality (social context of a place in a micro historical time). Situating the biography of a researcher in a research setting or in a successive research setting is possibly a natural and precise subjective interaction [15]. The inevitable of emotions [16] and daily experiences of researcher in the context of a precise and objective subjectivity of qualitative researcher is a key factor in the rigor of qualitative methods. The researcher is a temporal another in the close and traditional rural community. In place positionality depends on the perception of the researcher [20,19], but also on his successive personal circumstances [21]. There are emotional and positional changes that are described over a long period of time. Consequently, the researcher's interpretations depend in a certain way on their positionality in the life course [22,23]; they are like their intentionality lenses.

The relationship between professional life course and personal life can have two notable interactions (**Figure 2**): (1) A binary vision in the form of parallel lives with certain, but limited, interactions and (2) a hybrid vision where personal life is confused and the professional. The hybrid and the fluid are not only spatial concepts of research [24], they also affect the researcher. The fluid relationship between the qualitative researcher and research is a close relationship [25]: "Research subjects can also affect a researcher's trajectories in the research process" [21]. Personal changes affect, to a greater or lesser extent, the research trajectory [26], sometimes they can lead to abandoning qualitative research or, on the contrary, embracing (geo) ethnographic methods.

A singular combination of small voices in small territories or spaces: Local causes and things/being "out there" [27,28], and the recent new centrality of the other places. This is my center in Hooks expressions—the remote places are my center of research [29].

2.3 Main (successive) phases in a biographical perspective

The personal stories of a researcher affect the study subject, but also the research subjects affect a researcher's trajectory in the research process [21,26]. From a biographical perspective and cumulative

experience of research, from the initial archival research to experimental ethnographic research we introduce the personal life course.

When between 1985 and 1986 I participated in the reconstruction and recovery of two abandoned towns in the heart of the Pyrenees or in the north of Caceres due to the construction of a reservoir, I began my interest in the subject of depopulation and abandoned towns that have accompanied me until 2022. When I started on this subject I was a geography student and to obtain my Bachelor's thesis (BSc) in 1987 I was oriented toward the policy of colonization and the creation of new towns, in the Ph.D. thesis I extended the historical period from the mid-nineteenth century until the transition to democracy in Spain and the spatial dimension to the entire national territory. When I get a stable research position, I start a research program on depopulated and marginal areas that has lasted 20 years.

The evolution of the research has four essential phases, are cumulative, but which are also points of change in the methodological orientation, parallel to personal changes in my biography:

1) "Fieldwork" in local archives (documents and facts): Local sources, written texts, historical perspective, power perspective, close environments, and the descriptive introduction in research "scene" ^[19]. The local archives and the archives of the Department of Agriculture were the main sources of my early investigations of colonization policy. They are fragmentary archives, in many cases with conservation problems, where it was necessary to review a lot of documentation to find the data that was needed for the investigation, usually in inappropriate places with cold or heat. The information obtained is about the history of the political space of the municipality and about the historical policy of colonization. An adequate politics of archives was necessary ^[30,31], due to the difficulties of consulting the archives and documentation. The accessibility, the conservation, the ideology of the texts written at that time suggest a politics of archival research that connects the local power of the municipal archives and the state power of the departmental archives. In this stage I test the

historical demography with local archival data, to analyze in detail the evolution of small population entities created during the Franco regime. With the latest research on lost trails, I go back to consult this type of local archives mainly to indirectly date the rural routes ^[32], which are often phantoms in reality and in the archives themselves. It is necessary to selectively consult local archives to extract sufficient contextual data on ghosts from the past in the territory.

2) Numbers (data and statistics) and key discourses. The distance between the official data and the reality in depopulated areas, suggests no more numbers in my research. When I start my research I personally conclude that micro research is not possible to use statistical sources. In many towns I read in the statistics 'n' inhabitants and when I went in winter nobody or practically nobody lived there. It happened to me many times. This experience led me towards a strictly qualitative methodology. In this biographical phase I also investigate new politics in rural areas associated with the geographical debate of rural change and restructuring ^[33], especially through the key works in collaboration with Professor Hoggart on rural restructuring ^[34]. The relevant role of stake holders in innovative rural-agrarian politics—agri-environmental policies and early retirement of farmers—is another area of study ^[35,36], in a period of notable academic contributions in this research area ^[37]. These investigations are based on the analysis of the written and oral discourses of stakeholders at different scales and on policy analysis. With these investigations I personally reflect on where Geography is, given that it is necessary to stick to the rural analysis of public policies, as an established research scenario.

The weakness of statistics in micro analysis—the statistical data does not offer a great picture of the reality—and a personal evolution towards the construction of problems and research to modestly add something to rural geographic theory move me towards the qualitative analysis of new social groups and old social groups, in a work and study strategy that will last for 20 years.

3) Discourses, key interviews, singular voices,

check popular data in the field and check qualitative informations with other sources. The beginning of this phase is influenced by the notable socio-cultural turn of rural geography and the new study strategies that emerge in this period. In particular, mention the works of Cloke et al. on writing the rural or the other rurals, the generalization of the use of Deleuze's work and Valentine's contributions on encounter and difference ^[38-41].

This research phase suggests a variety of key close encounters, based on the relevance of the selection of particular positionality ^[30]: "Qualitative interviewing is not a laboratory experiment; it demands adaptation, flexibility and accommodation" ^[30]. In this biographical/professional stage, it was a question of selecting in the field a few representative cases of types of people that would allow the establishment of causal relationships on geographical processes ^[42,43]. Each person was interpreted as an analytical key. For many years, the study of new comers ^[44-46] in depopulated areas and the resistance processes of farmers in remote rural areas tried to select the right people who represented key types to establish causal relationships in the processes of geographic change and restructuring ^[47-52]. The geographical distance between selected cases suggests the politics of geographical dispersion in fieldwork. In this sense, one difficulty was the development of interview programs in extensive geographic areas. In short, the fieldwork was about contacting, identifying key discourses of new comers in depopulated areas. The research is finally focused on new comers' that were also new social groups of urban origin and define new social groups in rural areas, with a biographical vision of the urban-rural movement. Subsequently, I was concerned about the resistance processes of the local populations with two aspects: Resistance in a socio-geographical context of sparse population and resistance to the arrival of new settlers.

4) Discourses and experimental, extended stay in the field, (auto) ethnographical perspective, and need to understand the depopulation in my own experience. This phase is driven by the roots: "Autoethnographic self-narratives may take a variety of forms and

emerge from a range of speaking positions" ^[15,53-58]. In this last phase, it was necessary to understand the transformation dynamics in geographical places that were representative ^[59-61]. The site selection process was very relevant, as they had to be representative of certain types of remote and unpopulated areas. Subsequently, in each place, the social dynamics were analyzed, especially the encounters between old and new populations, a concern that was raised personally in the previous phase. The permanence in the area was notable in order to experience in our own daily life the dynamics of uninhabited areas. In short, in this last phase places and people are analyzed. The relevance of the place in the generation of new social subgroups and in the establishment of key discourses is another purpose of research. In this context is remarkable the skepticism of farmers is placed in the process of research ^[62-66].

The opening of a new phase does not eliminate the orientation of the previous ones, it is a cumulative and pyramidal process in the life of a (geo) ethnographer researcher ^[30], simply each phase has another main orientation, which coincides with changes in private life.

3. Experimental research and social change in depopulated areas

With extremely few populations... it is possible to ask what (social) innovation is. Or what is social change? With few people, more individual identities than groups identities or strategies in a close community. The processes of social transformation are processes of individual change in closed communities ^[67-69]. Multiple processes of permanent becoming in place (with negative transformation in time) are a key factor of research.

The hybrid perspective of the researcher in the construction of the research problem suggests two sides: (1) The hybrid perspective of other people in the area: New others and old others. (2) Hybrid relations between the researcher and depopulated marginal areas (spaces and people).

In this research context, three successive research strategies in my biographical or laboratory life per-

spective: (1) New social groups (mobility), (2) old social groups (permanence and resistance), (3) place research: Social heterogeneity in place (mobility and permanence), and the recent re-re-change of new populations by new populations.

3.1 Experimental research and new social groups: Mobility

This period of research is inspired by the contributions on the middle classes of Professors Cloke, Phillips and Thrift in relation to “the new middle class and the social construction of rural living”^[44] and especially the contributions of Professor Hoggart about “the middle classes in rural England 1971-1991” and “the diluted working classes of rural England and Wales”^[45,46]. The qualitative value of the newcomers for other people suggests some particular visions or approaches: (A) The contribution of the new service class to the process of rural restructuring is limited in statistical terms, especially in remote areas^[47,48]. (B) The migration of professionals is usually selective. People (newcomers) have a qualitative value in remote rural areas. (C) The value of an individual in small communities. It was intended to see the singularities from southern Europe. In addition, the contributions to the processes of social re-composition and gentrification of Professor Phillips and others are very relevant^[49,50]. In particular the contributions from “the restructuring of social imaginations in rural geography” to “comparative ruralism and ‘opening new windows’ on gentrification”.

A new way to live in a rural place is a permanent vision in the analysis of newcomers. The rural area is perceived as an ideal environment to continue a professional career. Consequently, one could possibly argue in favor of a degree of association between the emergence of new social groups and the environmental issue, especially in Southern Europe, where these two phenomena are clearly linked^[51,52].

With dispersed newcomers, the value of the interview is an adequate methodological orientation. The interview, with an autobiographical character, can be segmented into three main areas: Considerations about the environment; professional implications

of the rural environment; and relationships with the community. Semi-structured interviews have been frequently used as an information source in works about social change and counter-urbanization processes, and have been described as an appropriate technique with which to study these phenomena.

A special value and originality of the wider geographical area for the social class analysis is a consequence of the research. In southern Europe, where there is less research into the new middle classes and the rural environment with its different characteristics to the north/central European countryside: Lower density and more spatial dispersion of this social group^[47,48,51,52].

In relation to the micro place, rural environment and new social groups, the following classification can be made^[51] (**Figure 3**): (1) A regressive social fraction of professional middle-class group, with a territorialized work activity. (2) A progressive social fraction of professional middle-class group, with a completely free choice of residence—spatial freedom—who choose to live in a rural location mainly because of an idealized view of the rural environment. (3) A progressive social fraction of the group of new middle classes who can (re)orientate their activity in rural areas in the framework of environmental activities and who integrate environmental considerations in their professional activity.

Among the new middle-class groups there is a notable convergence in their consideration of the rural environment as (a) a physical environment, (b) a mixture of different factors and (c) of its influence on the profession^[51,52]. The rural environment is a distinction or exclusive factor, particularly in relation to the environment’s impact on occupation. But it is more difficult to establish segmentations related to the perception of the environment, where the differences are based on secondary categories or aspects and not in binary terms (**Figure 4**).

The specific role of the new middle classes in depopulated and marginal rural settings in Southern Europe aims to further analyses: (A) the interactions between fractions of new middle classes and the rural environment, (B) the depopulation and margin-

alization can contribute to social differentiation and the individual trajectories? Associated more with key groups (interviews) than with places (experimental)? (Figure 4).

3.2 Experimental research with old social groups: Resistance and permanence

The geographical context is the new role of remote rural areas on a wider or regional scale in the spatial, political and social dimensions. The main object of research is the permanence in the same place of farmers in remote and marginal rural areas.

The variable and multiple cultural dimensions of farmers, suggest deconstructing and individualizing responses to micro processes of change and marginalization in remote rural areas. The qualitative methodology is based on biographical and ethnographical stories [53] of farmers who have always lived in depopulated areas [54,55]. The analysis of discourses can be used to study the lifestyle and complexity of some groups of farmers and to study strategies of resistance and permanence in place. Oral histories have also been used to study the different farming cultures and processes of change [56-58].

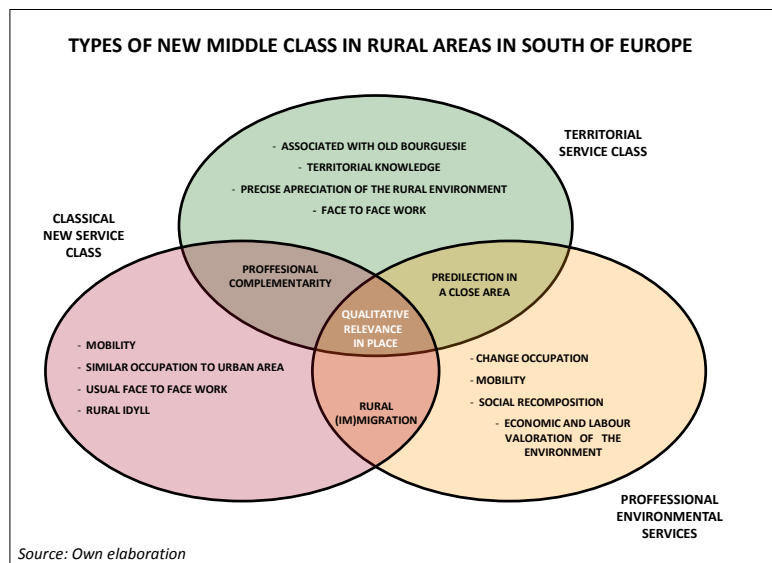


Figure 3. Types of new middle class in rural areas in South of Europe.

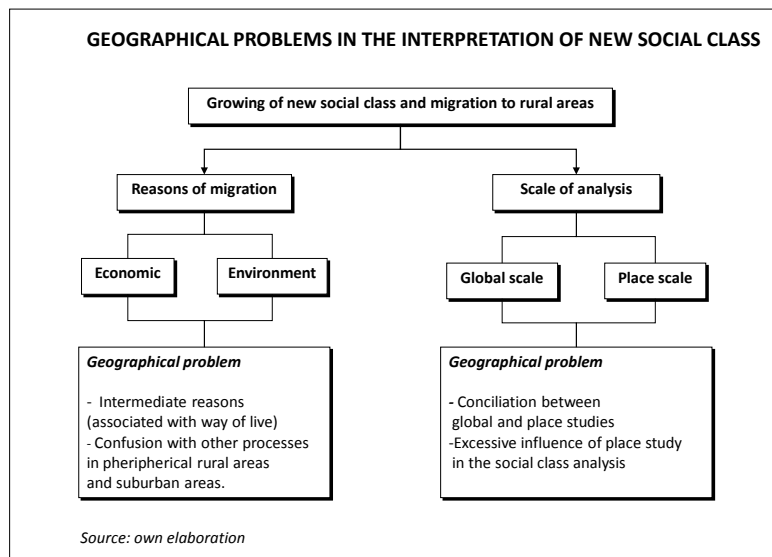


Figure 4. Geographical problems in the interpretation of new social class.

These resistance processes have a long-lasting nature, associated with a gradual and relative spatial marginalization and a transformation of the social and professional position in the context of the social community ^[54,55]. Ultimately, it is possible to establish micro differences between two processes: (1) of change and resistance that confer a degree of individuality too, (2) each new situation of stability or resilience, after the depopulation process has finished. It is also possible to observe how, in several ways, the processes of change and resistance adopt an individualized dimension.

3.3 Experimental research in remote places

In this phase the works Cresswell's "In Place/Out of Place" and Agnew are relevant, but above all the reflections suggested by the contributions of Professor Halfacree's "Rural space: Constructing a three-fold architecture" ^[59-61].

The initial assumption is the moral dimension of a remote place. Place and social composition suggest multiple possibilities of research around the intrinsic or singular value of the singularities (and commonalities) of each micro place. The researcher decides the most adequate route for qualitative research, between spectrums of possibilities ^[62,63].

The relevance of micro and experimental research is the adequate methodology in this phase: Interview and stay in the area of few people. The constructions of facts found the work in some places but not in others ^[1]. A key consideration is the relevance of the effectiveness of selections of research places ^[62-64].

The main problems in the fieldwork are: (1) The (initial) distrust of the outside and civil servant: The path from distrust to participation. My social and personal position was perceived in a number of different ways by participants—in some cases with distrust—and impacted the results of the research ^[65]. (2) The micro conflicts in the research area: People and micro identities. The changeable micro positionality of research and researcher in time is a relevant factor of consideration in fieldwork. (3) The influence in the qualitative research of marginality in the personal lives of people ^[64].

The difficulty of the research is the marginality of the researcher in the marginal research area. The problem of living with continuity in the marginality by the researcher suggests a/the moral life of the researcher, in this perspective the researcher as others in the research area suggest new identity relations. In this context, a vision of the double otherness of the researcher emerges: For the community and for the outer or external world. The extended stay in the research area is associated with successive changes in the positionality of the researcher: Marginality as a relative and individual concept.

4. Experimental research in remote places

The live and personal experiences have four dimensions: (1) Researcher's perceptions of rural changes. (2) Personal experiences. (3) Personal life. (4) Emotional dimension of research in remote rural areas.

4.1 Research perceptions of rural change

Simple perceptions of (innovation) and changes in remote rural areas are mainly: (1) Improve in the materiality of remote rural areas: rural roads and accommodation, internet... (2) Progressive loss of the sense of community. Feelings of fatality, uncertainty... (3) Changes in the touristic and recreational use of sites ^[66,67]. The antirural idyll in remote rural areas: The loss of authenticity and damages in the rural heritage and environment. (4) Changes in social dynamics, increased mobility, and the recent relevance of new-new comers. (5) Changes in mentality, from resignation to awareness of individual and social rights. This perception changes with time in a fluid and open interaction research-researcher.

4.2 Personal experiences

In a way from new binary relation to hybrid relation with the research in the process of reconciliation (or distantiation) with the participants: (A) Changes in the (co)evolution of personal/scientific

life and its influence in the fieldwork. The coevolved of researcher and fieldwork: the intersections of life events and fieldwork^[7]. (B) The self of the researcher as part of the continuity of research life process: From the initial enthusiasm of the young geographer to the “fear” of research in marginal areas in middle age. Besides, a biographical way from rural idyll to anti rural-idyll visions is mainly associated with the consequences of the 2008 global crisis in the form of “the anxiety of local populations”. (C) Personal experiences of place relate to the extreme process of depopulation^[15]: Distrust of the interviewee and the problems of the dispersion and concentration of the interviewees. Interview and going and return, with many kilometers, by the distance between participants in the research.

Two sides in my personal experiences (material and spiritual/emotional): (1) Personal experiences in remote rural areas in relation to innovations and improvements: (tele) Communications, innovations, well-being... A double circuit in my personal vision: Improve the conditions of research and loss of authenticity. The improvements in local roads and accommodation—a result of rural tourism programs—offer material security in the fieldwork. (2) Spiritual or emotional considerations: (a) Reconsideration of personal and professional aspirations. Lessons from the subject of research: The authenticity of local people. (b) Need to connect the research with the improvement of the daily life of participants (the essential utility of research).

4.3 Personal life and the approach to marginal research area

Laboratory life as research is not an autobiography (the self) is the continuity in the relationship between the researcher and researcher. In this sense, fieldwork and life course are interrelated^[7]. Personal experiences of place related to larger processes^[15] are very relevant in the production of qualitative subjectivity. In my own experience I had positive emotions with depopulated areas before the pleasure of staying and researching. Many times, when I returned from the fieldwork, a feeling of longing

overwhelmed me, towards the places and the people I was investigating.

The individual trajectory in qualitative research suggests two main sides: Feelings and activism. (A) Personal feelings to: (1) Newcomers, courageous and determined people—respect —people with the capacity to decide to change their life, they urged you to take the step and stay to live in a depopulated rural area. The relevance of micro place of newcomers: Homes, houses, villages^[68,69]. (2) Old populations, the spirit of resistance in place, identity with my place, my land, my landscape^[70-74]. Specifically, I was always affected by the skepticism of farmers and interview schedules “This is over”, sometimes very late and both tired. (B) Personal activism in local spheres and national newspapers.

4.4 Emotional dimension of the research in remote rural areas

The life events and emotions of a researcher affect the research process^[21]. The relevant role of emotions in (qualitative) research^[8,7], is a common, but variable element of qualitative research. The isolation of researchers in remote rural areas is an additional dimension of geo-ethnographic work, as it is carried out in aggressive environments, relative to the harshness of the socio-environmental context. In small communities, it is necessary to have a certain ability and personal fortitude to integrate temporarily and observe. Distance and friendly with participants are an equilibrated relationship: “The research participant’s involvement in fieldwork can constitute a professional engagement as well as a personal one”^[8]. There is an emotional dimension of fieldwork, with the personal feeling of depopulation and remoteness. Furthermore, personal feelings of distance and “remoteness” arise in relation to bureaucratized research structures (and the research institute). Is one of the main consequences of the (negative) “relevance” of institutions in fieldwork research? The pressures of results and qualitative research do not have a good relationship. The research project represents the time for speed results of field work.

The bureaucratic problems with the fieldwork and

its relevance in qualitative experimental research are key questions with time. In my laboratory life experience fieldwork, is a personal gateway in many moments to institutional work. The progressive preference by deep qualitative methods is associated with a/the moral dimension of everyday life (or researcher) in depopulated areas: Problems with diet and tendency to gain weight, emotionality with participants, social barriers in the research area, loneliness, inner peace (and tranquility) of researcher.

In what my research work helps these people? It is a personal question in my professional career. My answer: The collaboration between national newspapers and political advice. My final recommendation: Slow and inclusive final change for depopulated rural areas (2021-2022).

5. Conclusions

Laboratory life reflects the permanent relationship of a researcher with a study subject over a long period of time, of about 20 years in the author's experience. Research is usually based on the results, but not on the lives and emotions of the people who build, design, research and write them. The impact of life in qualitative research is a relevant factor in the production of qualitative and (geo) ethnographic information^[75]. Changes in life and emotions impact the form and focus of the investigation. The researcher's life cycle is associated with the emotional dimension of qualitative research.

Establishing laboratory life as a work strategy also allows for increasing the rigour of qualitative research and its scalar dimension in order to expand the spatial validity of its results. As there is a very long-term strategy, it is possible to combine different phases in order to increase the validity of the results. In our case, it has consisted of combining mobility, with resistance and the politics of places, of traditional and new populations in rural areas, in order to better establish the social effects of rural change processes. This research is linked to the life trajectory of the researcher and is unrepeatable, both in their execution and in their published results where deep causal relationships are disseminated, which

little change over time. The results of laboratory life research can only be supported or not by other scientific publications in other parts of the world. This is the fundamental value of a work strategy founded on experimental qualitative work as a vital experience.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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