

Article

The Effects of Tourism on Local Development in Protected Nature Areas. The Case of Three Nature Parks of Sierra Morena (Andalusia, Spain)

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Abstract: In rural spaces, new activities are developed to add to the traditional ones in the context of multifunctionality, considering the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage, as in Nature Parks. They incorporate new recreational and tourist functions, understood as an instrument for local development. This research aims to study the relationships between tourism and local development in three Natural Parks (Sierra de Aracena and Picos de Aroche, Sierra Norte de Sevilla and Sierra de Hornachuelos) in Andalusia (Spain). The research uses a mixed methodology consisting of, on the one hand, selective interviews with stakeholders focused on tourism and local development processes and, on the other, secondary data to analyze the repercussions on local development. The results show that (1) prevalence among the informants of the economic dimension in local development above the environmental and socio-cultural dimensions; (2) influence of declarations of protection and implementation of development policies on the growth of the tourist offer; (3) uneven tourism development in the different municipalities and Natural Parks; and (4) limited effects of tourism on local development.

Keywords: local development; Nature Parks; Sierra Morena; stakeholders; tourism

1. Introduction

Rural spaces are considered "places that do not matter" [1] and have been marginalised from the "dominant development processes" [2](p. 162). Thus, a structural crisis occurs, with a progressive disempowerment of rural communities [2,3]. These spaces lack infrastructure [4] and specialise in a declining primary sector [5,6,7,8]. These areas continuously lose competitiveness and employment [4,7], appearing depopulated and marginalised [1,5,8]. Multifunctionality and diversification become challenges to facing reality [9]. It takes place through promoting non-productive socioeconomic activities, such as leisure and recreation, residential, conservation and maintenance of biodiversity and valorisation of heritage or traditional productive activities reinterpretation [4,6,10]. As a result, rural areas become cultural and environmental symbols [11] since "they are no longer just places where people live and work, but at the same time have vital functions for society" [12](p. 12).

The peripheral rural areas, mainly affected by this crisis [2,4,5,8], generate a challenging development context. Remote rural areas become multifunctional spaces where the environment is essential [2,13]. The protection, conservation, preservation and safeguarding of natural (and cultural) resources is necessary [8]. Thus, Protected Nature Areas (PNA) are established to conserve biodiversity and ecosystems [14] to provide ecosystem services [15] or face climate change effects [16]. Rural spaces lose their dominant social oppositions, become depoliticised [17], and lose their productive function [2]. They appear as "preserved spaces" [18], where environmental attractiveness and relatively easy access make local decision-making subject to space preservation criteria [2,19]. Different PNA categories are created, ranging from total protection (naturalisation) to

flexible protection formulas, in which natural and cultural heritage protection coexists with socioeconomic development and production and extraction activities [20], such as Nature Parks (NtPs) in Spain [21]. The conception of rural space as an environmental reserve produces advantages and limitations [2] that are not exempt from contradictions which imply the creation of genuinely anthropic spaces [22]. Such a relationship between the social system and its environment results in the manifested dialectic between conservation and socioeconomic development [23,24] and between new uses and the agrarian bases of society [13]. Therefore, there is an evident need to integrate the local population in the declaration processes, in PNA decision-making and management processes to evolve from the "museum-like" to conservation approach understood as rational use of resources by applying management instruments [24,25]. In this way, an essential role in the NtPs is attributed to tourist and recreational activities [13,21,26], insisting on the relationships between tourism, NtPs management and rural development [13,26,27].

On the other hand, it is necessary to highlight that rural tourism is a complex and diverse reality [28,29] since there are: (1) different tourism models and activities that are not much integrated [28,30]; (2) great variety and thus the quality of "services, infrastructures and equipment" (SIEs) [29,30,31]; (3) diversity of actors involved [31,32]. In addition, rural tourism development often depends on resources, content and specific territorial contexts [30,31], and, in many cases, the only common element is that it takes place in a rural space [33]. Although the environmental motivation is the classic tourist in PNA, it is not ecotourism or nature tourism but rural tourism, which includes nature-based products [27,34,35,36]. In this way, PNA becomes a critical typology for attracting large-scale tourists in peripheral rural spaces [7], positioned through "autonomous tourism" [37].

In the EU, The Future of Rural Society [12] represents a turning point in facing rural areas issues, proposing rural development from within, according to which endogenous social and environmental resources [38]. Accordingly, rural development becomes the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) after production, influencing strategies and political measures that reinforce the idea that "rural and agrarian are not synonymous" [39](p. 204). The objective of the CAP is to maintain and preserve rural landscapes by integrating new activities to revitalise traditional activities, improve living conditions, foster population growth, generate employment, etc. [40]. Leisure and tourism appear as an opportunity to reconnect with the world [3,29,39], as they are adaptive [9] and innovative strategies [41] that enable the reinvention of these rural spaces. Multifunctionality and diversification become a part of community rural development policies that consider the community's capacities and characteristics to enhance and value their assets and resources through activities [39,43,44].

Consequently, it generates endogenous development [4] and community empowerment [45], which is especially important in PNA [27]. The EC introduced a participatory and local "bottom-up approach" [43] in search of solutions to rural issues by endowing the CAP with the LEADER initiative (1991) implemented by Local Action Groups (LAGs) to generate political, administrative and inter-territorial contexts for governance [43,46]. However, LAGs, in many cases, have been indicative superstructures intended to finance projects rather than provide overviews [47]. It resulted in uneven effects of rural development and increasing significant differences between central and peripheral rural areas [2,48]. Even though rural areas received more funds [49], the results were no better because these funds can be mismanaged [50]. The LEADER I, II and + initiatives, the associated national programs (in Spain, PRODER I and II) and the new CAP instruments (through the FEADER) integrated leisure and tourism into the rural development paradigm as part of the LEADER approach [51]. Thus, although these instruments have not been of a tourist nature, they functioned as if they were [35,39,52] by focusing on "the diversification of agriculture through tourism" [47](p. 1).

Academic and political discourses highlighted the role of tourism in revitalising rural areas [53], insisting on the tourism-equals-development binomial. Many rural spaces in which "any economic diversification will be welcome" [4] (p. 532) have seen

tourism as a challenge [55] and a "desirable diversifier" [56] (p. 391) to face the economic decline [57] and regenerate traditional livelihoods [58], generating idealisations and (re)constructions of the past, which (re)define the territories [3]. In tourism in rural areas, the issue of sustainability is closely linked to local, endogenous development processes [4,31] as a "catalyst for innovative local development" [56] (p. 383) by reducing regional disparities [49] and local connection [3], especially in peripheral areas [55]. In these areas, local development is not a desire but a need to maintain the community based on endogenous resources [56]. However, the community-driven scenario often identifies multifunctionality with diversification and multiactivity [59], which nearly assimilates rural development and rural tourism [4], resulting in an extensive focus on tourist activity [60].

The commitment to tourism as an instrument for development has led to competition between activities or mono-specialisation, perceiving tourism as a panacea [45,61,62]. However, this hypothesis has been formulated from a community, state or regional geographic scale without considering the county and local scales beyond case analysis and often out of context. Thus, tourism is not a "Cinderella" activity for all places [63], making it necessary to call for the moderation of the optimism that floods the rhetoric of its role in development [64], generating contradictions, potential negative impacts and conflicts [65]. The current results contributed to a critical vision [66], emphasising that not all places are touristic or have the same potential [40,67]. Tourism is an activity plagued with limitations, often hidden in political and popular discourses for development [49,68], assuming, for some, the commercialisation of the rural space [35,69].

Therefore, it is necessary to check whether the tourism-equals-development correlation is a myth or a reality [49,55]. The analysis is carried out at the immediate local level, i.e. at the scale where local development, sustainable development and sustainable tourism is based on the integration of endogenous natural, cultural, economic, human and social resources [4,60,71,72]. For this, it is necessary to analyse the contribution of tourism to local development and its impacts on the environmental (the protection and conservation of the environment, the quality of the landscape, etc.), economic (regeneration, the influx of capital, effective source of income and job creation, synergies, maintenance of traditional economic activities, etc.) and social (empowerment, improvement of quality of life in the long term, equity, etc.) dimensions [4,29,39,47,62,64,71,73]. Moreover, it is necessary to study the territorial context of development in terms of cooperation, imbalances, and accessibility, among others [7,30,49,74], to establish the conditions under which development occurs [64]. The analysis requires considering the evidence that there is a tendency towards the concentration of tourists in a limited number of regions [49] and that the PNA need socially viable strategies for conserving biodiversity and a positive relationship between conservation and multifunctionality [25,47].

Considering the above context, the analysis of the dimensions of local development becomes valuable [4,40] in the community-driven periphery. Therefore, this research aims to study tourism in the context of multifunctionality in three NtPs in Andalusia (Spain) and the importance of tourist activity on local development processes. While supply and demand demonstrate that tourism and tourist activities are a fact and are necessary functions critical in PNAs, the analysis focuses on (1) how the relationship between tourism and development is perceived; (2) what impacts tourism generates; (3) whether tourism generates local development.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Data and Methods

The analysis of pairing tourism and local development recommends using the case study, which has been applied to tourism and local/rural development [40,52,55,60,72,75] and in the PNA [20,24,27,32]. This research is part of a broad project on sustainable tourism, governance and local development in PNA, focused on analysing the perception of those who participate in or influence tourism activities and the planning process [7,60,76,77]. Therefore, the authors applied a mixed methodology.

On the one hand, semi-structured interviews help to analyse the primary and secondary issues addressed by the stakeholders and the importance they give them [60,76] on three topics: (1) the perception of the relationship between tourism and development, including its dimensions [42,77,78]; (2) the problems derived from tourism [15,24,53]; and (3) tourism as a driver of local development [40,75]. The interview (Int) had ten open questions, of which 9 were the ones that asked directly about the contribution of tourism to local development. At the same time, the rest contribute to understanding the dimensions of development and perceived impacts (Table 1).

Table 1. Interview questions.

Code	Question	Topics
(q1)	What function do the nature park and biosphere reserve have in your destination (and others)?	(2)
(q2)	What is the value of the landscape in tourism?	(2)
(q3) ^(a)	How do you perceive sustainable tourism development in your destination?	(2)
(q4) ^(b)	Does sustainability have a substantial effect on the tourism development of your destination? Why?	(1)(2)(3)
(q5) ^(a)	What kind of conflicts related to sustainability exists between stakeholders?	(2)(3)
(q6) ^(a)	Could you give a practical example of sustainable tourism development in your destination? What would you improve?	(2)
(q7)	What happens in the context of global change with your destination?	(2)(3)
(q8)	Are there difficulties in managing the tourist space?	(2)
(q9) ^(b)	Does tourism contribute to local development?	(1)
(q10)	What consequences has COVID-19 had on the destination?	(2)(3)

(a) Questions based on Renfors [77]. (b) Questions adapted from Renfors [77]. Authors' elaboration.

Forty interviews were conducted between April and July 2021, applying a non-probabilistic sampling method considering the territorial balance of the interviews (relevance within each NtPs, centrality/periphery) (Figure 1). Some interviewees were directly identified: directors of NtP, managers of LAGs, municipal political actors and tourism technicians, and a private nature conservation foundation. Tourism companies and tourism business associations were selected based on their offer of services such as accommodation and/or tourism activities [79] and their local or foreign character [53,80], and also applying the snowball technique [81] based on good practices described by other interviewees. The interviews were transcribed and coded, depending on whether they verbalised the ideas (emic) or the researchers identified them as a posteriori (etic) [82]. Given the restrictions imposed by the sanitary measures due to COVID-19, the interviews were virtual, using Google Meet®, which made it impossible to carry out systematic interviews with the local population.

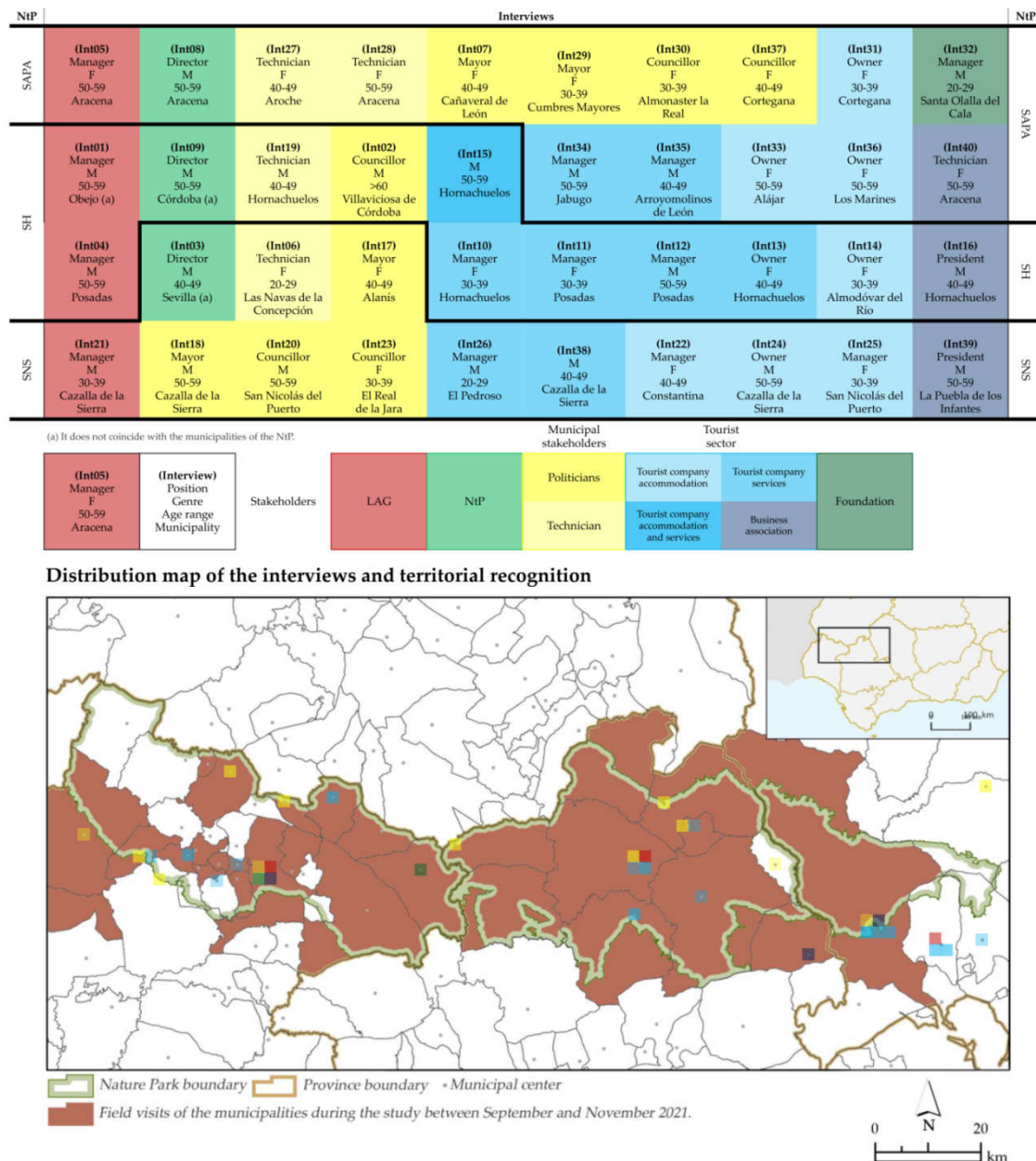


Figure 1. Conducted interviews and the type and personal characteristics of the interviewees according to the Nature Parks they represent. In addition, a map presents the territorial distribution of the interviews carried out and the territorial recognition. Authors' elaboration.

Moreover, the results of the interview were contrasted with other sources: a) results of the territorial survey, carried out between September and November 2021, analyse accessibility and conduct informal interviews with the local population; b) results of the analysis of secondary data [40,83] from official statistics and official databases [79,84,85,86,87,88].

2.2. Case Study

The study area is located in the SW of the Iberian Peninsula, in Sierra Morena, a typically Mediterranean middle mountain range. Its specific characteristics led to the formation of the dehesa, a thinned Mediterranean forest where forestry, livestock and hunting activities are combined. It is a unique agrosilvopastoral exploitation system around which an exceptional landscape with outstanding heritage attractions developed [89]. The dehesa is subject to changes in coverage and degradation due to abandonment or overexploitation [90]. In addition, the dehesa is currently facing the effects of climate

change and the "dry" (fungal disease of *Quercus ilex* and *Quercus suber*, the main species of the dehesa) [16].

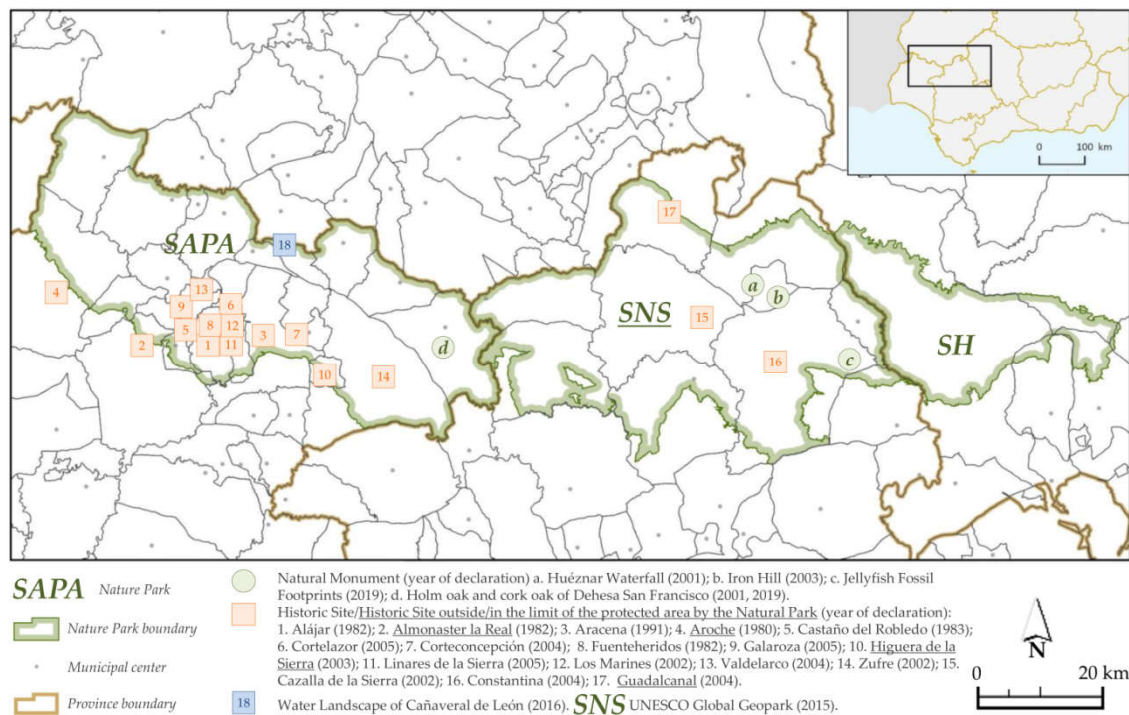


Figure 2. Scope of the study. Source: [87,88]. Authors' elaboration.

In 1989, the Andalusian regional government declared six NtPs in Sierra Morena for its ecological and landscape richness [86]. Of these six NtPs, this study focuses on the three westernmost (Figure 2), namely NtP Sierra de Aracena and Picos de Aroche (SAPA), NtP Sierra Norte de Sevilla (SNS) and NtP Sierra de Hornachuelos (SH) that since 2002 make up the UNESCO Dehesas de Sierra Morena Biosphere Reserve (DSMBR) [86]. In addition, since their declaration as NtPs they have accumulated other nature protection categories: Special Conservation Areas, Special Protection Areas for Birds, and natural monuments and SNS was declared a UNESCO World Geopark (UWGpSNS) in 2015 [86,88]. On the other hand, protected cultural heritage is also important, among which 17 Historic Sites stand out [87].

The NtPs have the particularity that most of the protected area is a private property [91,92], reaching 98% in SH [21,93], and historically large estates were developed [94,95]. SAPA and SNS have a significant area (Table 2) and have population settlements inside, while SH has a smaller area and lacks an internal network of settlements [21,96].

Table 2. General data of the Nature Parks

NtP	Province	No. municipalities	Area (ha)		Total population		Population density (pop./km ²)
		(a)	NtP	Total ^(b)	1960 ^(b)	2020 ^(b)	
SAPA	Huelva	28 (20)	186,827	280,318	72,478	36,202	12.91
SNS	Sevilla	10 (4)	177,484	238,486	55,452	24,790	10.39
SH	Córdoba	5 (0)	60,031	171,094	32,213	14,998	8.77
Total/Mean		43	424,342	689,898	162,103	75,990	10.69

(a) With part or all of its surface within the NtP, in parentheses, those that include 100% of its territory. (b) Excluding the municipality of Córdoba capital, with a little protected area, which distorts the data. Source: [84,86,88]. Authors' elaboration.

The study area has been affected by a profound crisis since the 1960s, which caused a massive rural exodus [97], and today has an ageing population with low demographic density (Table 2). Of the 42 municipalities (excluding Córdoba capital), only four have >5,000 inhabitants (2020), while 18 have <1,000 inhabitants [84].

In SAPA and SNS, agricultural activities linked to the dehesa predominate [91,95], highlighting Iberian pig farming, around which the Iberian pig industry develops [97,98,99]. Hunting and forestry activities predominate in SH [21]. Public and private services are concentrated in the county capitals (SAPA, SNS) and the municipalities of the Guadalquivir Valley (SH) [90,97]. LAGs have been implemented in the territory since 1991, coinciding with the areas of SAPA and SNS with LAGs, while SH was divided between two others.

It is a space with a marked peripherality, bordering provinces, regions and States, with poor communications by road with the provincial capitals and, especially, within the counties. High-capacity networks only cross the territory. This situation means that 13 SAPA municipalities are better connected with Seville than with Huelva and also better than the SNS municipalities with their provincial capital (Figure 3).

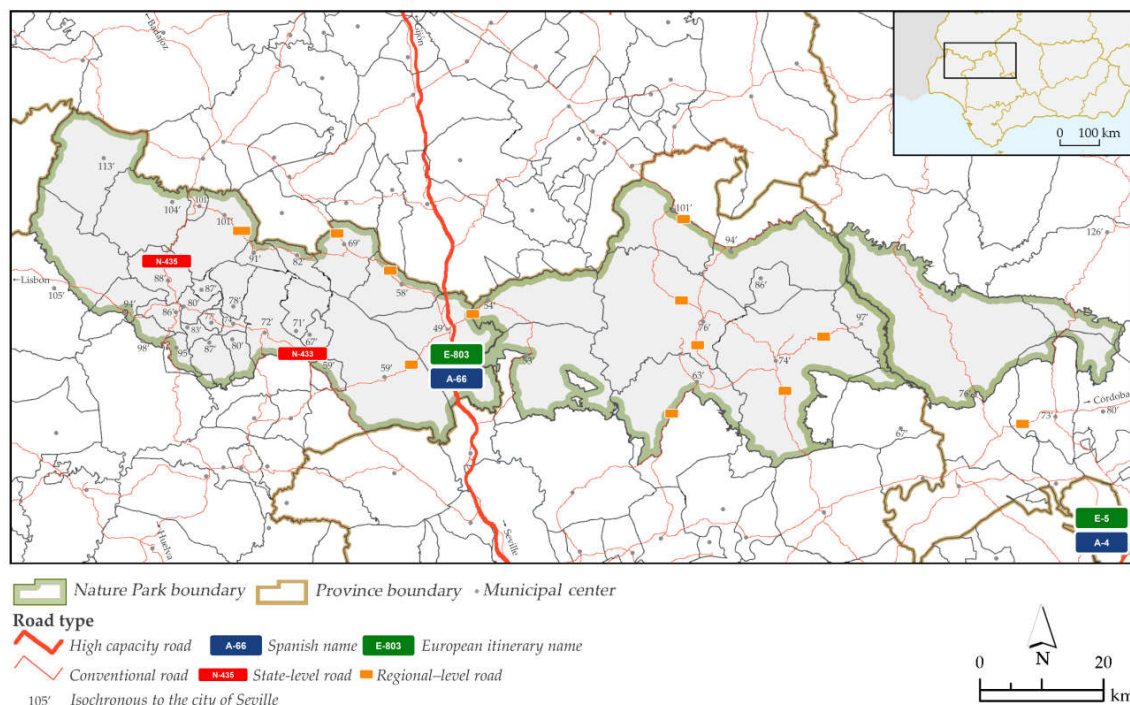


Figure 3. The communications network of the study area. Authors' elaboration.

3. Results and discussion

In their provincial groups, the three NtPs are secondary because of the importance of urban cultural tourism, i.e. cities of Seville and Córdoba and the coast, i.e. Huelva coast [100], assuming the 12,241 accommodation places in the study area only 1.24 % of the Andalusian total [79,85]. At the time of the declaration of the three NtPs (1989), there was practically no tourist offer [21,101] (Figure 4). According to the interviewees, the declaration of the NtPs generated a favourable context for tourism development, as has been highlighted for the Spanish NtPs [27,29,39]. However, they emphasise that it was the institutional framework established by the CAP and the implementation of the LAGs (SNS in 1991; SAPA in 1995; SH in 1995 and 1997) that represented a turning point for the implementation of leisure and tourism as new activities [29,46,47]. Nonetheless, a particular initial oversizing (SNS) generated a decline in supply before 2000. Growth has been continuous since the beginning of the 21st century, despite the cessation of activity caused by the international economic crisis. Except for SH, the offer skyrockets in the post-crisis

period, even with the pandemic. The accommodation offer is developed earlier in SNS [91]. Still, it is more significant in SAPA, being the most recent and scarce of SH [21]. There has been an initial predominance of camping places, especially in SNS and SH, to that of rural houses in SNS and regulated establishments in SAPA, standing out after the international financial crisis, the increase in non-business activities, particularly in SAPA¹ (Figure 5).

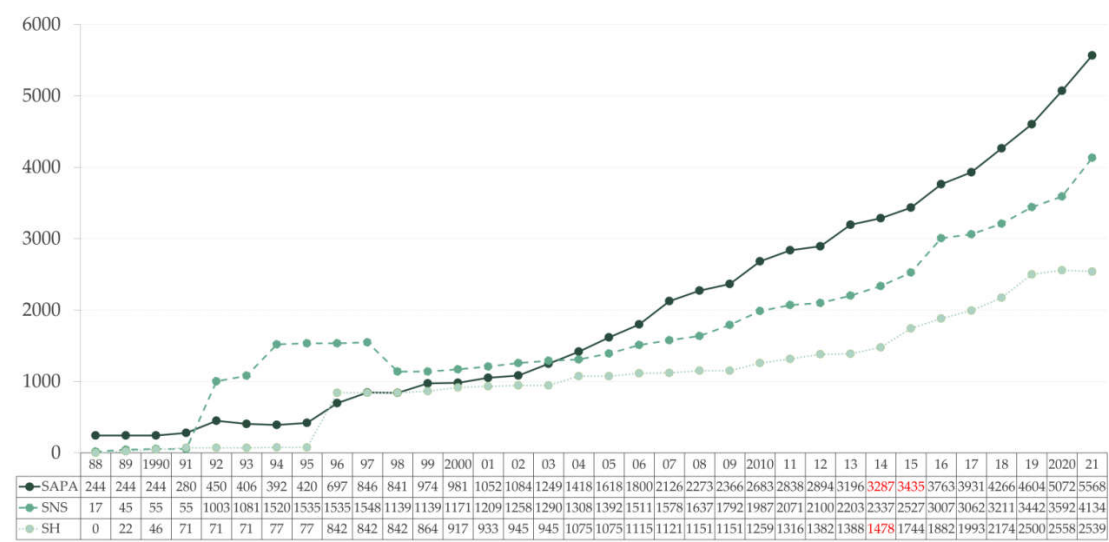


Figure 4. Evolution of the number of accommodation places. Data in red indicates estimation. Sources: [79,85]. Authors' elaboration.

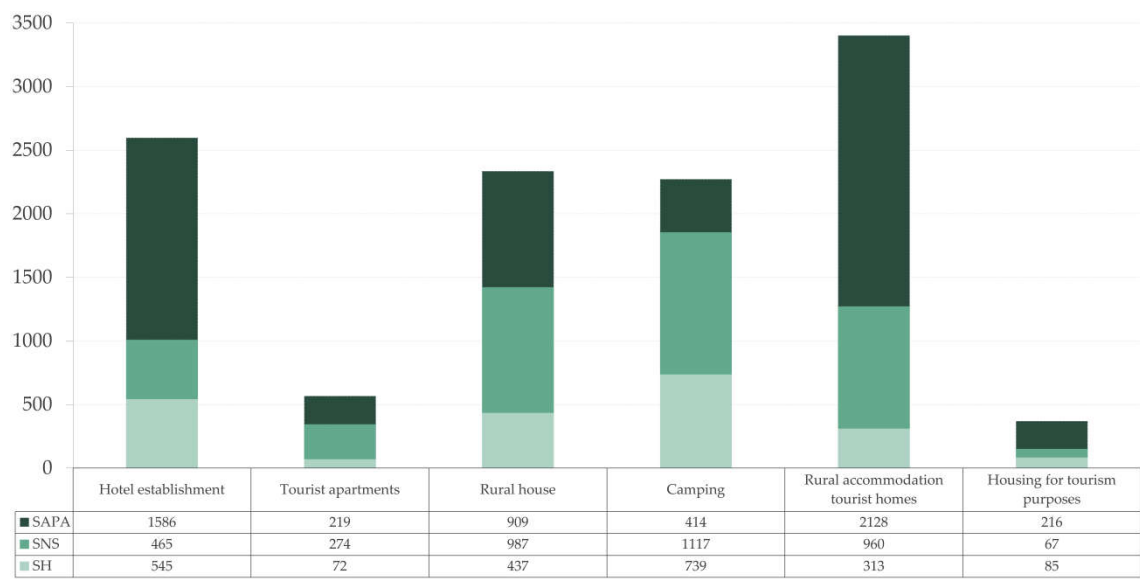


Figure 5. Offer of accommodation places by type. Source: [85]. Authors' elaboration.

The accommodation (Figure 6) in SAPA, concentrated in the central-eastern municipalities [101], while in SNS, it was in the central-southern ones [91]. In the case of SH, the offer is located outside the ENP, in the urban centres. However, only in Hornachuelos municipality is accommodation offer directly linked to the NtP [21], while the rest are related to the valley of the Guadalquivir and the city of Córdoba (Int04, Int11, Int14). The average size of the accommodations (9.7 beds) makes marketing difficult [35,77] and limits the presence of organised groups [102] favouring autonomous tourism [37] since only 18 hotel establishments, i.e. 11 in SAPA, have ≥ 50 beds.

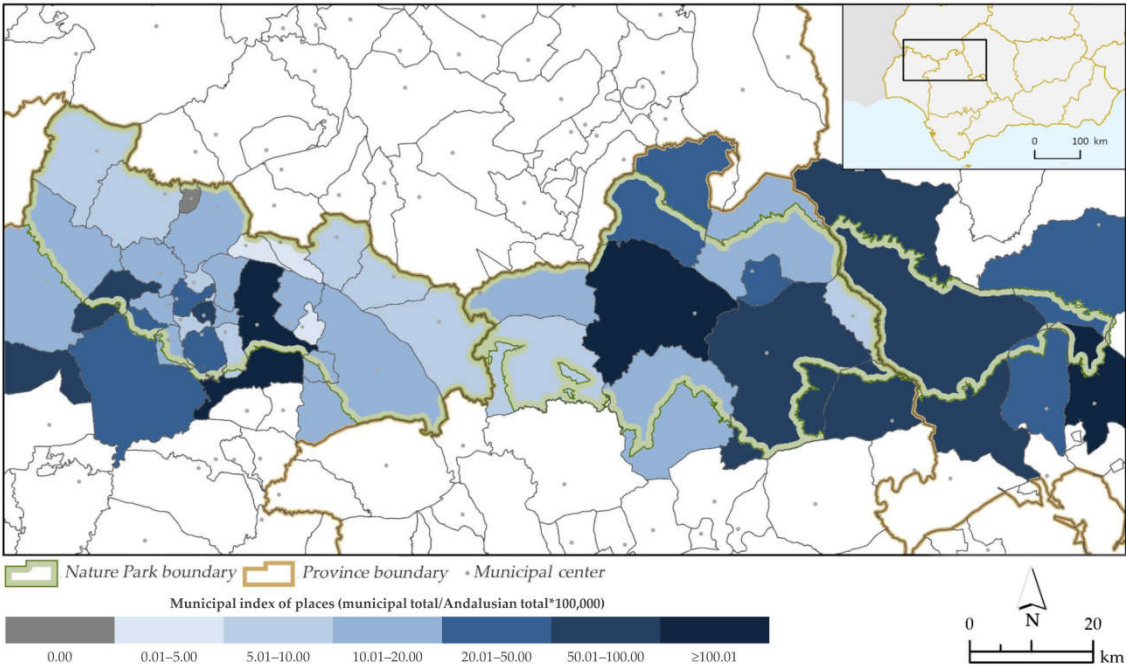


Figure 6. Municipal index of tourist places (May 2021) (over the total of Andalusia). Source: [85]. Authors' elaboration.

Initially, passive rural tourism was developed [103]. Still, since the beginning of the 21st century, activities and products based on segmentation and search for experiences, have been incorporated [14,27,34,36] favouring activities in nature, adventures and eco-tourism [104]. Thus, the offer of tourist activities is recent as it appears in the Andalusian legislation in 2002 [105]), predominating in SAPA (Figure 7).

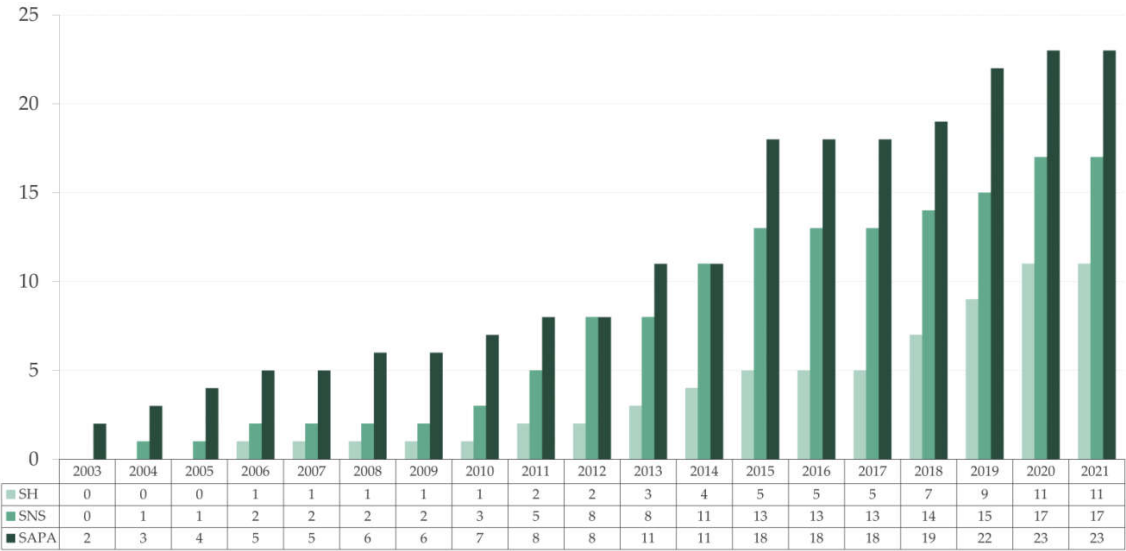


Figure 7. Evolution of receptive companies and activities. Source: [79]. Authors' elaboration.

3.1. The environmental dimension of local development

The environmental dimension is fundamental in tourism planning and public management in PNA [77] to achieve conservation and avoid derived issues [27,39]. Exceeding the physical load capacity generates environmental impacts [106]. The informants appreciate overload in specific places and moments (Figure 8). They include central areas that have a more significant offer (especially in SAPA), best-known natural attractions (highlighted in SNS), specific trails (highlighted in SH), places where cultural

events take place and the most accessible spaces. However, some municipal stakeholders consider that "there are more people, but not overcrowding" (Int19). The cause of the overload is attributed to the lack of awareness of the local population, visitors and tourism companies and to "companies prioritising flow over quality" (Int07). Some companies self-limit (Int31, Int33), and some municipalities act by limiting capacity (Int27). Informants highlighted that it is an effect of the pandemic and a consequence of the perimeter closures of the provinces. Municipal stakeholders and some tourism companies point out the lack of planning and the absence of control by the regional environmental administration (NtPs), standing out in SNS and SH above SAPA. In this sense, what is the appropriate growth rate of tourism? While some informants defend the increase in tourist flows (Int19) or holding massive events (Int30), others speak of the need for a continuous flow, but not more (Int01, Int24) that allows the (economic) viability of the companies.

In contrast, they ask if there is the possibility of "increasing the number of tourists without environmental costs" (Int33) and claim low tourism rates (Int27, Int31, Int32, Int33). The management of NtPs and the protection of their environmental values, given the increase in recreational and tourist activities and the growing number of visitors, is complicated [27] in territorial contexts that lack physical barriers and where most of the property is privately owned [21,91,92,93]. Thus, there is no limit, such as physical load capacity or a control instrument [106], to guarantee protection [14]. Its establishment is necessary [107] and to consider tourism in a steady state [108]. They contrast the opinions of those who feel fulfilled by tourism and hungry for tourism [57] with those who bet on relaxed and respectful tourism [109].

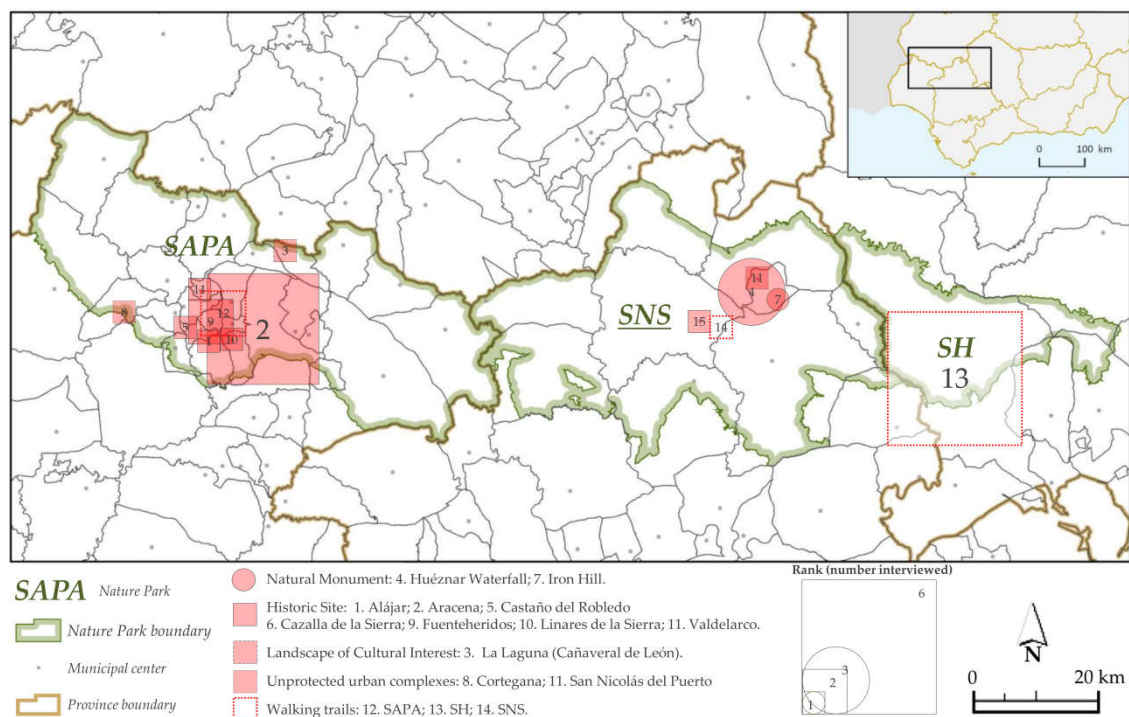


Figure 8. Overload, according to the informants. Source: Interviews, 2021. Authors' elaboration.

Over-frequency generates fragility [69]. According to the informants, it is a specific issue coinciding with the seasonality of the activity (spring/autumn, weekends/holidays, holding events), and its main effect is that it "compromises quality care" (Int05). Interviewees insisted that hikers rather than tourists tend to be more respectful) caused most of these problems. Especially during the pandemic, over-frequency increased (Int03, Int05, Int28, Int29), and a concentration in the summer (2020 and 2021). Over-frequency is the effect of the existence of heterogeneous flows [14] in which entertain-

ment/education/conservation [23] and hiking are mixed with tourism [110]. Nonetheless, the increase produced by the pandemic has been temporary [111].

Considering the fragility of the Mediterranean terrestrial systems [112] and, specifically, the dehesa [16], it is essential to consider the perception of the informants about global change and its repercussions. Stakeholders with a holistic vision (directors of NtPs, managers of LAGs, some municipal stakeholders, tourism companies, and the Foundation) identify it as a severe problem. They consider that global change affects the environment, the population, agricultural activities and tourist flows. These stakeholders highlight that those who notice the changes the most are the smallest towns (Int05), although the population tends to think that global change is not imminent (Int04, Int05). Most municipal stakeholders and tourism companies do not understand the concept of global change, relating it to tourism change and technology. At the same time, a small part refers exclusively to climate change, but they do not see it as a priority because "it has not affected us yet" (Int27) or "we are used to it" (Int06). Overall, there is a disconnection from the reality of this problem, and to be appreciated, it must directly affect the community [16]. Tourism companies focus on the issues that affect their business directly due to the decline in long-distance travel [113,114] and consider how not to damage natural capital [115] by looking for local tourists [116].

The generation of waste is a substantial environmental impact [117] since in the NtPs, there are limitations for its collection and processing, being "the costs assumed by the local population" (Int21, Int39). Solid waste generation is higher than the regional average in 34 municipalities in the area, especially in SNS (Figure 9), coinciding with the interviewees' opinions. However, there is no direct relationship between waste generation and the number of tourist places, except in the case of SAPA, where certain correspondence can be attributed to second homes. However, the interviewees related this problem to the economic dimension (collection, transportation and processing costs) [118], not to the environmental issues derived from it.

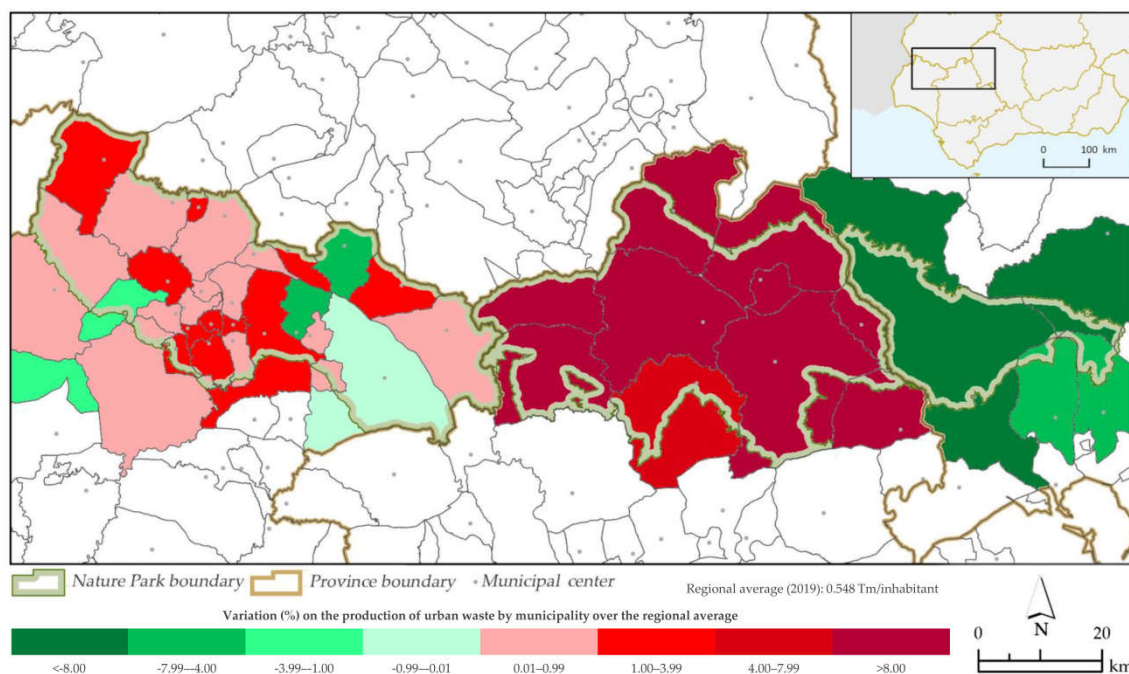


Figure 9. Urban waste generated in the study area (2019). Source: [85]. Authors' elaboration.

The waste of water in a Mediterranean climate with cyclical droughts is a crucial impact [119], and in an increasingly arid context [112], is highlighted only by one NtP director (Int08), who associated it with swimming pools with tourist accommodation, especially during summer. However, water consumption is not exclusively related to tourism in the area. Yet, it exceeds the regional average in winter and summer (Figure

10), which must be associated with the doubling of the population due to second homes, especially in SAPA, and the efficiency of the supply networks. At the same time, the interviewees did not perceive it as an issue due to the existence of water reserves (reservoirs) [120].

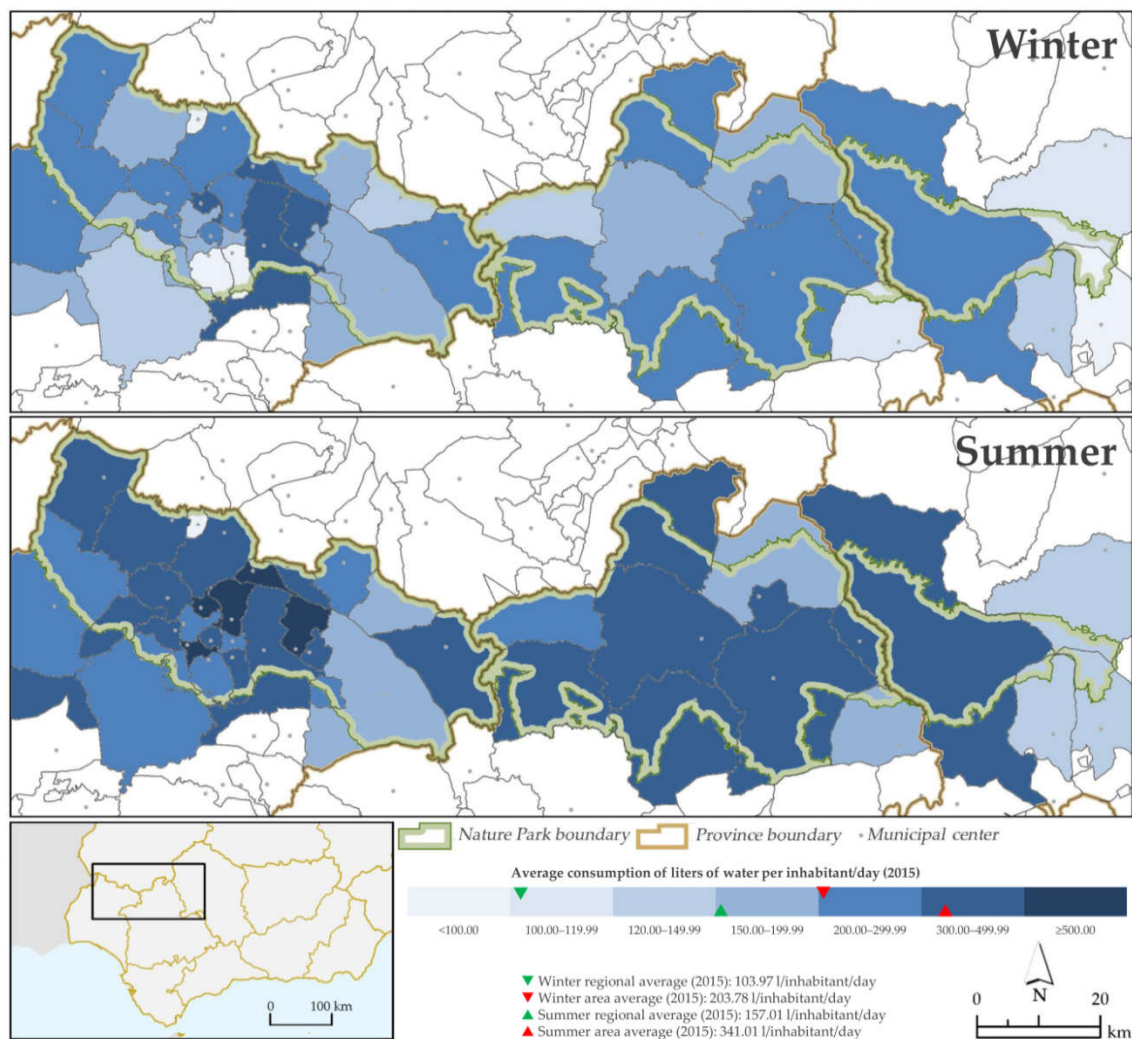


Figure 10. Municipal water consumption in the area in winter and summer (2015). Source: [85]. Authors' elaboration.

In general, the informants agree that tourism and tourism activities are sustainable since heritage (natural and cultural) is (re)valued, frequentation is limited, infrastructures are scarce, and tourists are interested in the local environment [4,39]. In addition, in the NtPs, there are limitations of use, although sometimes the management instruments fail [121]. Opinions on the environmental dimension and tourism differ according to the personal characteristics of the informants, i.e. age, gender, training, place of residence, and ties to the area. The innovators, trained people, women and young people strongly perceive environmental dimensions as they know how the market works [19]. They introduce environmental values, are concerned about climate change [77], and have a more excellent perception of the issues among informants linked to traditional agricultural activities [113]. However, the rest of the stakeholders tend to downplay this dimension [77].

3.2. The economic dimension of local development

In the scientific literature, emphasis is placed on the contribution to the economic growth of rural tourism at the local scale [23,103].

Tourism is perceived locally as an engine of economic activity [29]. For some interviewees, tourism has ceased to be a secondary activity to become the main one as an opportunity to replace traditional activities in crisis (Int19, Int20, Int40). For others, tourism is a complementary activity (Int03, Int05, Int08, Int09, Int21, Int32) that "generates excessive expectations" (Int21) and "policies focused exclusively on tourism are a problem" (Int05), while the traditional activities are still needed (Int03, Int08, Int09). Finally, for municipal stakeholders from the periphery of the NtPs (Int29) and with only a part of their municipality protected (Int23, Int27, Int30), traditional activities are the basis of the economy because there is productive specialisation. Taking as a reference the data of companies by sector of activity (excluding agriculture) in 2009 (beginning of the international economic crisis) and 2019 (in recovery and pre-COVID-19), tertiarisation is observed (Figure 11). However, in services, retail, and commercial companies predominate and only in five municipalities (SAPA), the percentage of hospitality companies in 2019 is higher than the rest. The data show that tourism is not the main economic activity in the municipalities, except in those with a sparse and aged population, where it appears feasible [122]. Changes in business activity coincide with the crisis and post-crisis recovery of traditional industries [98,99] and construction [123,124]. While tourism activity boosts other sectors, its development did not meet expectations [26,45,49,62,103].

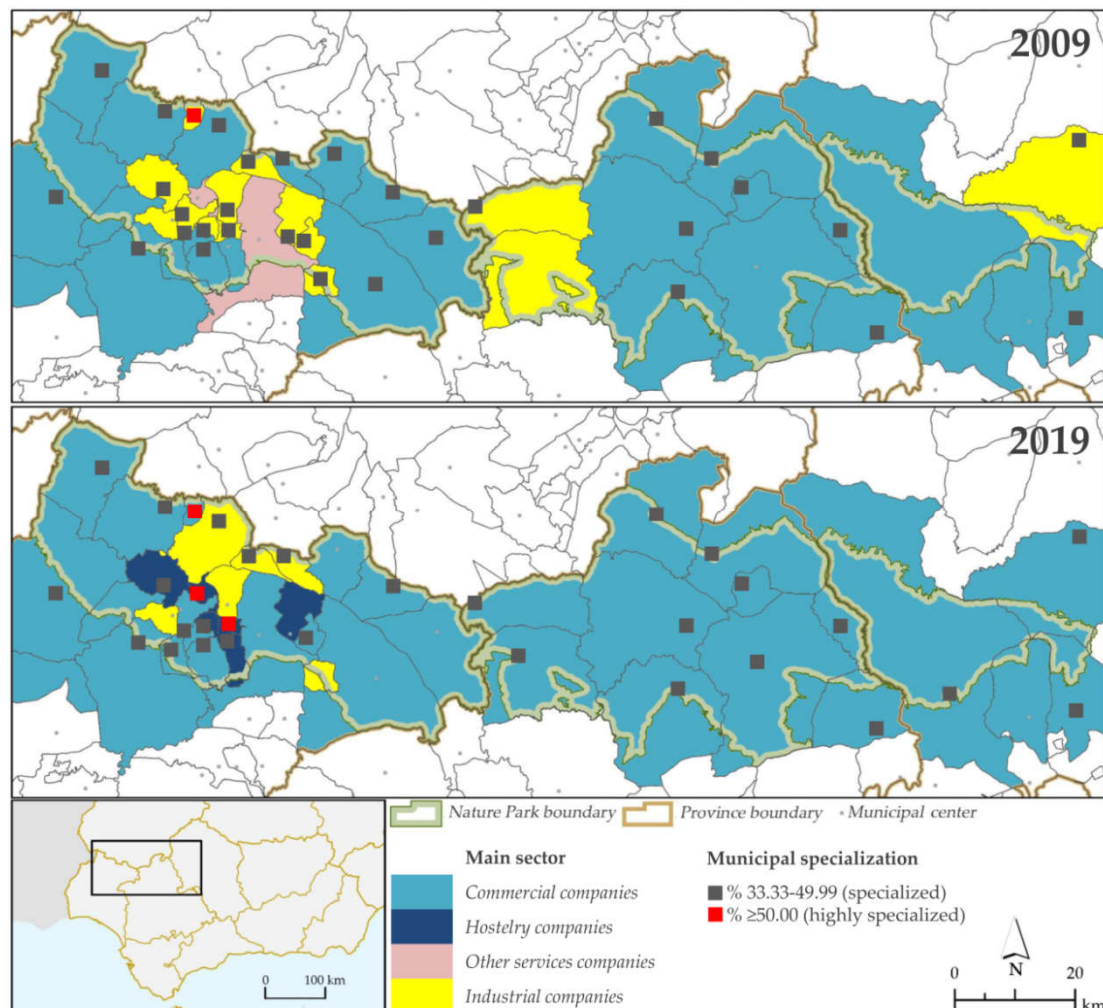


Figure 11. Companies by central activity sector (excluding agriculture) in 2009 and 2021. Source: [85]. Authors' elaboration.

Employment is frequently seen as one of the most significant benefits of tourism in rural areas [4,7,19], particularly, in NtPs experiencing chronic unemployment [26,125]. However, it is not an aspect highlighted by the interviewees. LAG managers emphasised

that there are families that live from tourism (Int05), generating employment for young people, entrepreneurship and self-employment (Int04), to which some municipal stakeholders agree (Int18, Int30). In contrast, job creation is low for tourism companies, as they are micro-enterprises that generate part-time and temporary employment (Int15), although there are new job opportunities with nature tourism (Int35). No tourism employment data are available by municipality. Still, instead, tourism employment is considered within the services sector, generating more employment than others. Taking employment by activity sector as a reference in 2009 and 2019 (Figure 12), how agricultural employment dominates in SNS and SH can be seen. In SAPA, there is a limited increase in this and a high increase in outsourcing.

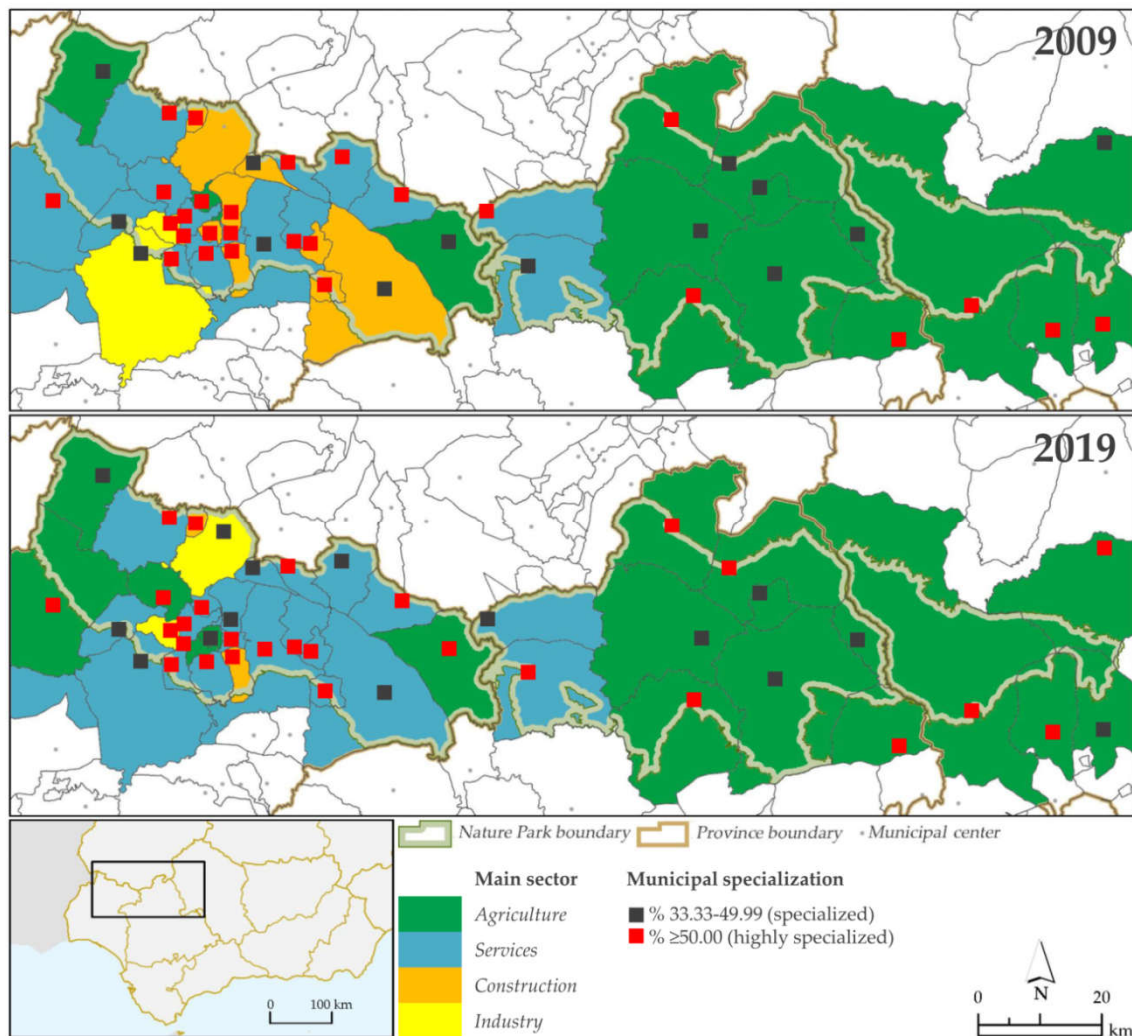


Figure 12. Employment by central activity sector in 2009 and 2019. Source: [85]. Authors' elaboration.

Considering the contracting generated in the services sector in December 2019 [126] (high tourist season in an average year) (Figure 13), in half of the municipalities, it is >50.00%, being higher in municipalities with a concentration of tourist offers of SAPA. However, when analysing the temporary nature of these contracts (Figure 13), it is >50.00% in all the municipalities, standing at 100.00% in 23 of them, highlighting the most peripheral ones and with a less diversified economy, but also the small municipalities with many accommodation places (SAPA). Similarly, municipal unemployment rates (2019) [85] are higher than 25.00% in 27 municipalities, including some of the most touristic ones (Figure 14). Thus, there is no direct relationship between the number of tourist companies, accommodation places and employment in services justified by public em-

ployment and private services (commerce), predominating in the municipalities (county capitals) in which there is a micropolitan effect [127]. The interviewees cannot affirm tourism is the main economic activity since agricultural activities continue to dominate, although with differences from West to East [128]. Tourism does not immediately affect employment [64] and has not managed to balance the labour market. Since tourism micro-enterprises and non-business activities stand out, they generate little employment, low-skilled, short-term, seasonal, precarious, and with low remuneration [29,77,129,130]. Although tourism generates job opportunities [131], it contributes to underemployment and illegal activities [21]. In addition, the expansion of non-business activities does not generate employment, while unemployment continues to be a structural problem [26].

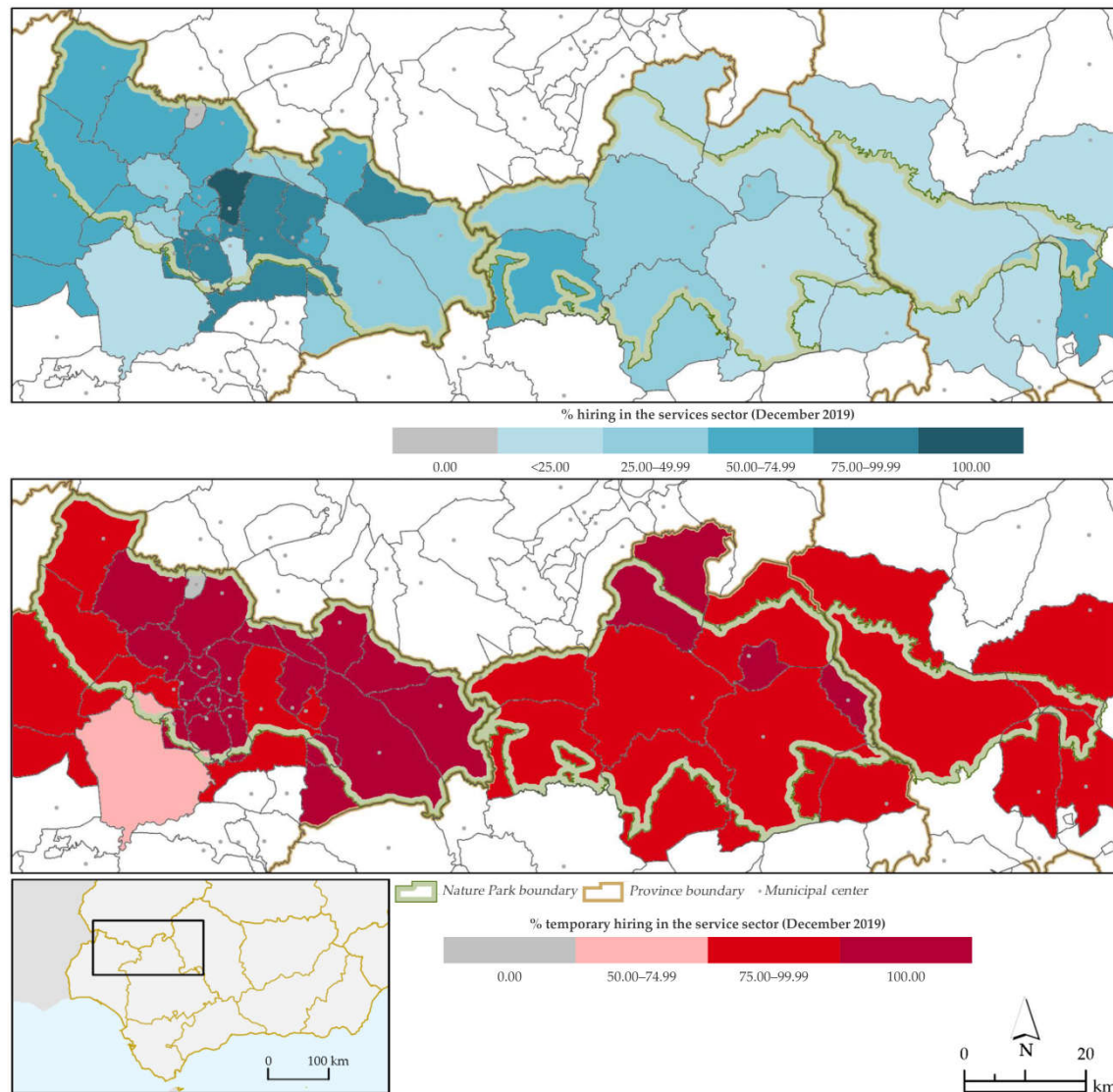


Figure 13. Hiring (upper map) and temporary employment (lower map) in the services sector (December 2019). Source: [126]. Authors' elaboration.

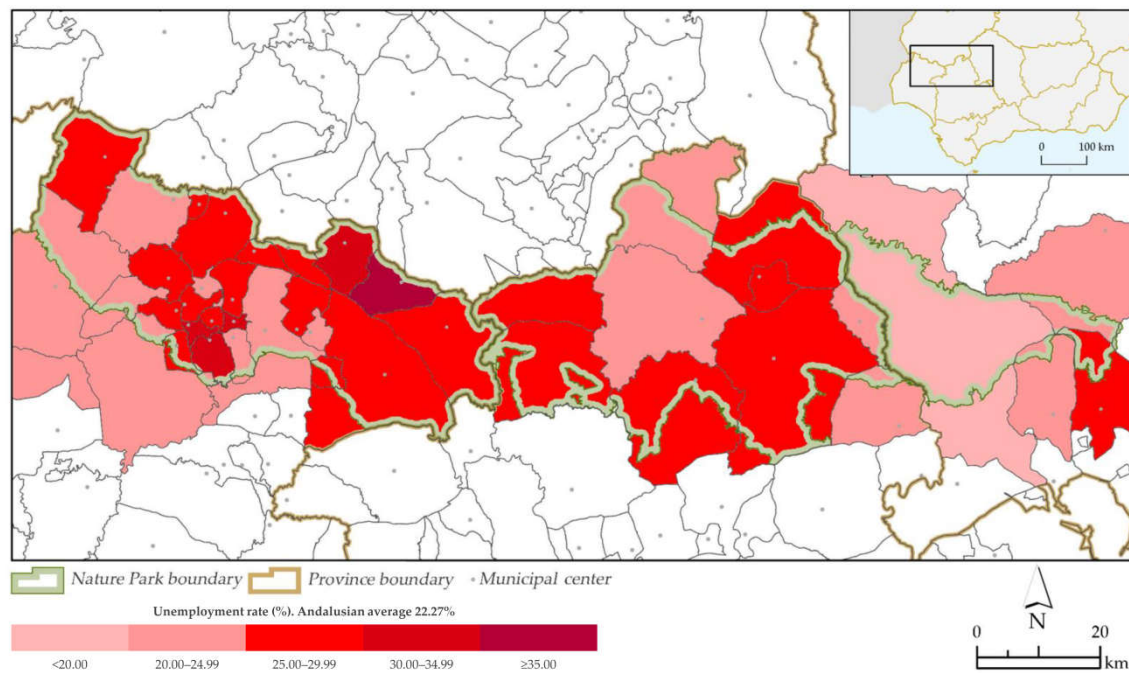


Figure 14. Unemployment rate (2019). Source: [85]. Authors' elaboration.

An important problem is the loss of traditional activities within the NtPs and the introduction of new ones [4,6,10]. The interviewees appreciate the increased tourist activity and the continuous decline of traditional activities. Still, they do not establish a relationship between both processes or the loss of agricultural employment. They attribute the abandonment of primary and secondary traditional activities to internal factors, i.e. ageing, abandonment of the farm, costs, low employment, and working conditions (Int19, Int20, Int26, Int35, Int39) and external factors, i.e. low profitability, risky activity, need for investment (Int05, Int39). However, while some point to the fact that tourism is a secondary activity as a problem, coming to identify the abandonment of traditional activities with modernity and the future (Int13, Int26), others maintain that traditional activities are essential for the conservation of the NtPs (Int03, Int08, Int09) and tourist activities are complementary to maintain them (Int08, Int04, Int21, Int22, Int32, Int33, Int39). The managers of LAGs observe conflicts between tourism and traditional activities, with the economic loss of farmers due to the theft of fruit and mushroom picking. (Int05) or invasion of farms that generate costs (Int21). However, from the tourist companies, the fact that most of the property is private and there can be no tourist use is considered an issue for tourism (Int12, Int13). Thus, agrotourism appears as an innovative response to the loss of traditional activities [132] for the conservation of agricultural heritage [133] and the revaluation of traditional practices and customs with additional income [47].

Nonetheless, agrotourism development is complex [132], identifying a scarcity of initiatives of this type despite the insistence in the last two programming cycles of European funding [47]. On the other hand, carrying out fieldwork allowed us to talk about distortions in the labour market [109]. The latter is a redundant topic among agricultural entrepreneurs who emphasises the difficulties of finding workers in the season due to tourism as a source of attraction that offers advantages over primary activities [125]. The conflicts between visitors and traditional activities result from urban visitors understanding that the countryside belongs to everyone [77,92]. It results in competition and is a source of conflict between antagonistic activities [39].

A network of tourism entrepreneurs and services is essential to generate local development [53,131,134]. However, from the LAGs, the lack of entrepreneurial culture stands out (Int05, Int21). Tourism companies and business associations point out that the expectations of business creation have not been met (Int36, Int40). At the same time, some

municipal stakeholders speak of difficulties (population size, income and investment) for entrepreneurship and the presence of non-entrepreneurial activities [135] (Int20, Int29). Out of the 1,007 tourist activities registered in 2021, including accommodation and receptive companies/tourist activities (Figures 6 and 7), only 421 are business activities [79], which is an expression of scarce entrepreneurship [39,136], fragmentation and individualism [19,35,39,47,77], frequently due to contextual limitations, such as ageing or financing [46,68].

The institutional sustainability of tourism depends on continued funding [40,47]. Some municipal stakeholders point out that the municipalities do not have the resources for actions in the tourism field (Int17). However, they have directly invested in support infrastructures without considering their implementation costs. Others launched SIEs, e.g. information points or accommodation, with their funds and invested funds from subsidies or aid, which tourism companies see as competitors (Int12, Int15). Moreover, others state that the issue is not due to financing but because aid and subsidies result in the same actions (Int23).

Similarly, business associations highlighted that sometimes it is not a problem of the amount invested "but of putting a value on what the territory has" (Int39). Most tourism companies indicate that although rural tourism is a priority objective (Int14, Int16), aid is scarce, as is the public and specific investment (Int10, Int15, Int16), which results in the lack of SIEs, requiring using the companies' resources (Int24). Thus, municipalities appear as facilitators of tourist activity [77], while micro-operations depend on scarce public European, state, and regional resources [28,39,136]. The available public funding is concentrated on opening tourist establishments without planning [21], location and accessibility [46] and without evaluating their use [137] due to the belief that the resources generated by themselves tourist flows, forgetting that not all spaces have the same tourist potential [40], so there has been the uneven success of the initiatives [46].

Investment constraints and opportunities [73,74] call capital inflow [40,55,73]. Even acknowledging the role of LAGs and NtPs in the development of tourism, LAGs managers (Int05, Int21) and some tourism companies (Int13, Int22, Int35) highlighted that external investments are flowing into the tourism sector through investors, speculators, operators, tourist chains and intermediaries, with the acquisition of second rural and urban homes and the opening of accommodation. Real estate transactions indicate the flow of capital, e.g. second homes or housing. Based on the data from 2006 (real estate bubble) and 2019 (normality) (Figure 15), the area average is lower than the regional average, but it significantly exceeded in aged, sparsely populated municipalities with demographic decline. In 2006, most of the transactions were for new housing, which implied limitations for the planning of the territory resulting in conflicts between land uses. In 2019, it corresponds to used housing, i.e. for rehabilitation, there are no construction limitations in the town, except for historical sites. In 2006, the micropolitan effect [127] was detected and led the inhabitants of the most touristic municipalities to move their residences to other less attractive nearby municipalities (SAPA) and the deurbanisation of Córdoba in the Guadalquivir valley (SH) and Seville (SNS). Generically, tourism is not perceived as a condition for a flow of capital towards the NtPs [73,74]. Despite its importance in the field (SAPA, SNS) [91,123,124], none of the informants referred to second homes for the urban population and the effects of real estate speculation (land and housing inflation) [39,109,123,124].

In contrast, the effects of gentrification are detected in municipalities with a concentration of heritage [40]. Dependency relationships are generated by decision-making outside, taking advantage of economies of scale, seeking short-term benefits, receiving subsidies, and reverse capital flow [39,77,136] that do not contribute to development [55]. On the other hand, large operations have proven to be of little viability, as happened with the closure of public initiatives in the mid-2000s and private businesses during the international financial crisis due to their disconnection from what rural tourism is in NtPs and their low yields [55].

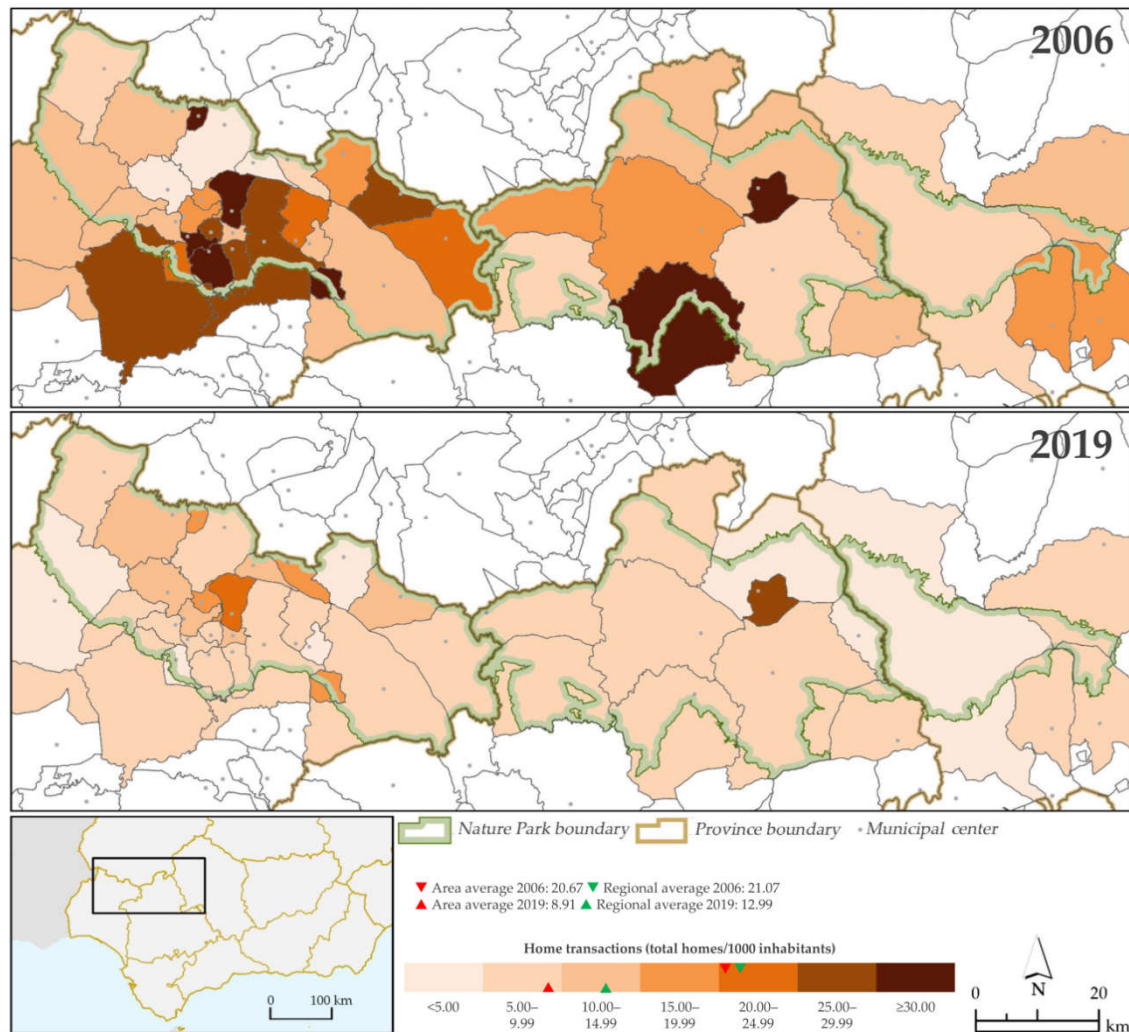


Figura 15. Real estate transactions in 2006 and 2019. Source: [85]. Authors' elaboration.

Poverty is a redundant problem in the PNA[15,23]. Only a part of the informants directly references income (Int02, Int19, Int34) or tourism as a source of direct income (Int05, Int07, Int15, Int21, Int32, Int39). When analysing the data of the declared income variable between 1989, the time of the declaration of the NtPs, and 2019 (pre-pandemic time) (Figure 16), the area's average income increased by 45.90%, but 26 of the 42 municipalities lost income above average. As a LAG manager points out, "income has worsened" (Int01), producing growth in municipalities that concentrate more services (county capitals) and receive residentialization due to urban effect in SH or micropolitan in SAPA. Tourism does not show an immediate effect [64] or in the medium term since more tourism offers do not necessarily mean that income increases, having a small role in changes in poverty [130].

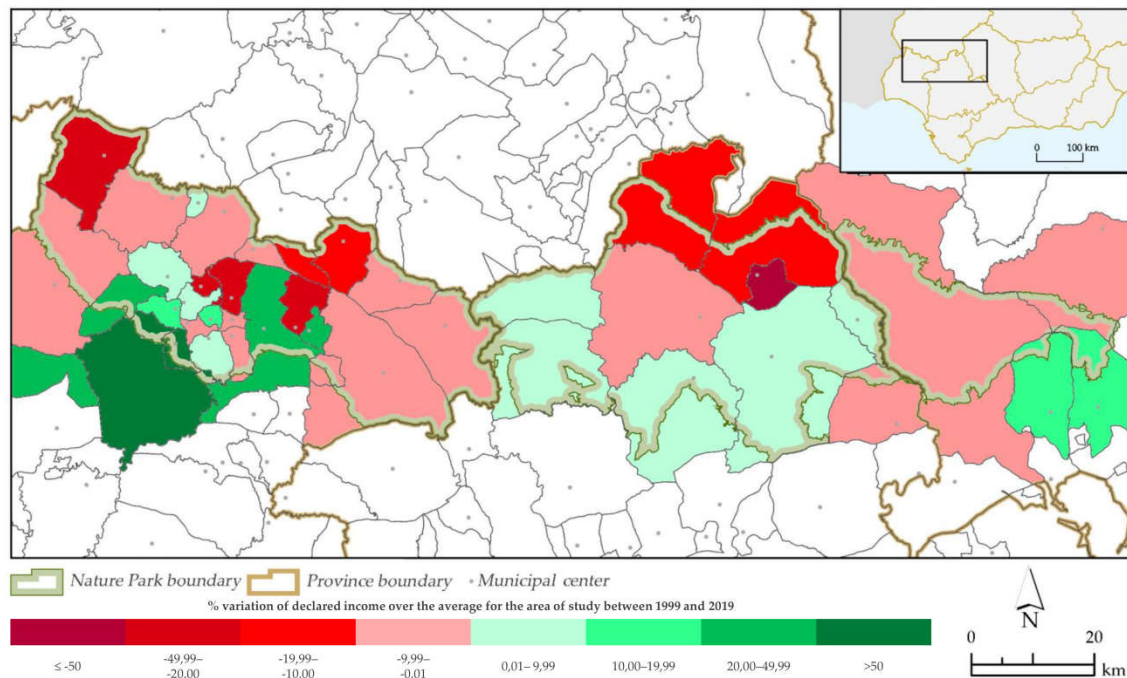


Figura 16. The variation in declared income over the average for the study area between 1989 and 2019 (%). Source: [85]. Authors' elaboration.

This economic dimension predominates in the informants' discourse [77,129], which the majority considers the most important. It stands out among municipal stakeholders, characterised by geographical centrality and concentration of offers and attractions, tourism companies and business associations, even in a hidden way through references in actions or models. However, it reflects the preconceived scheme presence, given that the topics addressed in the tourism study were repeated. Still, the perception does not respond to the evidence of a multiactivity approach [39] that insists on economic growth indicated by profitability [77]. Profitability is a more important objective than development itself, without considering that this in PNA is anti-economic as it assumes the decline of natural capital [138] and shows short-termism [139]. In this sense, tourism is seen as a private economic activity [140] from which people live in the ENP, without seeing it as an instrument of capitalism confronted with the sustainability [141] of traditional activities necessary for the conservation of the resources that are the main attraction [25]. The critical vision is among those with humanistic, technical and environmental training. They are those who establish the need for development in NtPs to be socio-economic and who see a disconnect between the measures that promote tourism and leisure and the agrarian bases of society [13], despite pan-tourism risks that suggest dependency issues [25] and monoculture [39]. This approach is based on multifunctionality [39], understanding that tourism is not an alternative to the problems of the primary sector but rather a form of diversification [35,47]. Faced with the expectations created, the economic effects of tourism have been more limited than expected [26], not resulting in a solution to all [45,61,62].

3.3. The sociocultural dimension of local development

The sociocultural dimension is essential to address the problems of tourism development and local development [40,83,142] in the PNA[24].

Improving the quality of life appears as one of the objectives of the NtPs [27,45,125]. For NtPs directors, the foundation and pro-active tourism companies, the existence of NtPs has an intrinsic value and improves living conditions "for economic growth" (Int08) through new functions and diversification that provide sources of income and opportunities (Int03, Int08, Int09, Int11, Int35). For the managers of LAGs, most of the municipal

stakeholders, tourism companies and business associations, the existence of NtPs limits development expectations and the population "does not live better or does not perceive it" (Int05) due to the imposition of plans from above down, because the critical matter is nature (Int01, Int02). This interrelation with the economic dimension [77,78] is linked to the means to continue living in the place and not to achieve better places to live and visit [143].

Studying the social carrying capacity is essential to establish the host community's and individuals' capacity to absorb tourism inputs and function without disrupting social harmony [144]. The social carrying capacity is a limited variable for the informants, concentrated in SAPA (Figure 17), who refer to it concerning saturation (Int05, Int07, Int08, Int09, Int27, Int30) in the places that have more urban services and attractions, even if there is no accommodation (Int07). The number of accommodation places per inhabitant (Figure 17) established the social burden higher than the regional average, with a greater concentration in central areas (SAPA and SNS) and very high in municipalities with low populations.

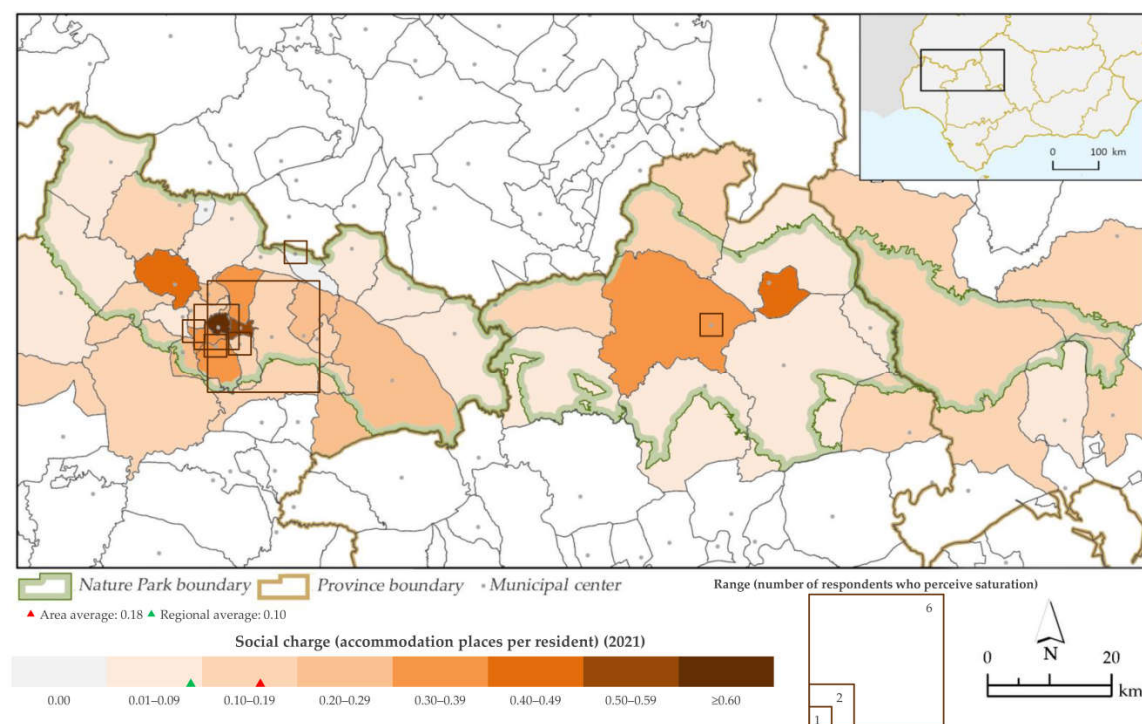


Figure 17. Social burden (accommodation places/inhabitants) (2020). Source: [85]. Authors' elaboration.

Tourist and resident interactions generate different attitudes towards tourism [77,142]. Seasonality, tourism segmentation with activities not integrated into the territory, lack of planning, and coordination cause over-frequency, concentration and over-dimension of the offer, producing negative social impacts on the host community population [39,57,144].

The provision, improvement and maintenance of SIEs (public and private, not only tourism) and achieving thresholds [145] are important in the sociocultural dimension. Most of the informants highlight the precariousness of the support SIEs through, e.g. electricity network, water supply, and waste treatment, due to the limitations of the PNA (Int21, Int25) and the fact that tourism has not only improved it yet, it is also limited by that precariousness (Int21, Int25). In this sense, the lack of communication networks stands out, which prevents "being connected" in places with neither Internet nor telephone coverage (Int01, Int25), hindering tourist activity and the life of the resident population. (Int01, Int07, Int17, Int18, Int20, Int21, Int22, Int24, Int25, Int30, Int33, Int37). The

continuous flow of tourists and visitors allows commercial services to develop in most touristic municipalities and county seats (Figure 18). However, foreign companies predominate in municipalities with a low population and many tourist accommodations, and commercial services stand out above the three NtPs and regional average. Both banking and health services are linked to external thresholds, i.e. profitability, population, and public policies, which did not improve by tourist demand. Municipalities have difficulties maintaining public services, e.g. recycling or waste collection [77]. Furthermore, they also struggle to obtain and guarantee private services, e.g. telephone lines or Internet, with limitations due to NtPs that expand towards the peripheries through service thresholds and costs [55], resulting, once again, in an economic vision.

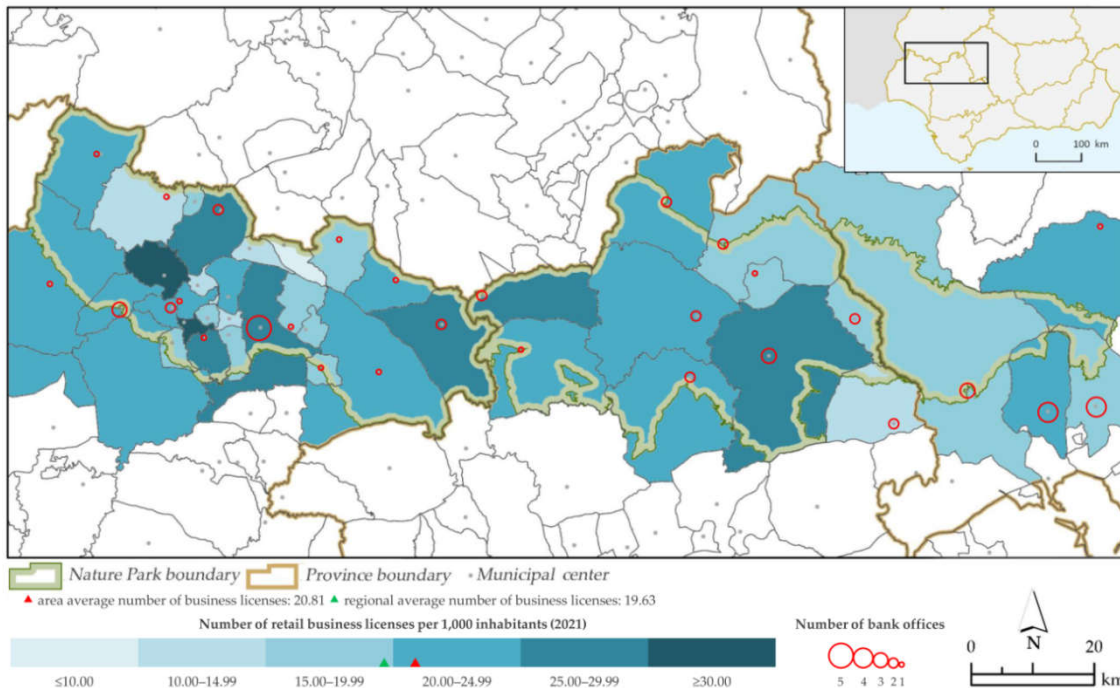


Figure 18. Private services: retail trade and bank offices. Source: [85]. Authors' elaboration.

Community empowerment is an essential indicator of local development as it contributes to improving well-being in the long term [4]. Among the informants, there is a feeling that sometimes everything is done for tourists (Int01, Int05, Int10, Int31) and even the loss of local political power in favour of residents from outside (SNS) is verified, while in informal interviews, the local population highlights that they feel alien to tourism development. Thus, the local community is disempowered, feeling it does not participate in implementing the activities when the priority should be given to their needs and interests [39]. In contrast, the importance of the tourism activity of women and young people in entrepreneurship and job performance is detected, but it is more qualitative than quantitative and is an example of proactive tourism companies [29,80,132]. Rooting and uprooting are endogenous and show the empowerment of small businesses [72], which links to neo-ruralism, frequently from other European countries. It is a new philosophy of life, according to Lordkipanidze et al. [134], "model entrepreneurs" who generate employment and, curiously, establish roots through propensity for local consumption or hiring local population [44].

Valuing heritage produces a revaluation of local authenticity and identity [3,39]. Managers of LAGs (Int04) appreciate this process and tourism companies and business associations (Int10, Int40) highlight that tourism values heritage and traditional work, but they value the territory as a "stage" for tourism activities (Int02, Int16, Int17, Int30, Int36, Int37, Int40). In the context of global cultural models [35], there is a loss of cultural identity of the local community as a symbol of sociocultural deterioration [4]. It is identi-

fied with the trivialisation of the territory [114]. In this regard, some farmers are willing to preserve tangible heritage on their lands [133] with agrotourism, which allows them to share local culture with visitors [47]. However, sometimes agricultural rituals are trivialised as simple representations disconnected from rural reality [146], neither contributing to promoting the values of rural life nor exchange [29].

The scientific literature indicates the demographic rural tourism effects fix the population and counteracts emigration [7,26,29,35,41,49], slow depopulation [29,47], attract population [147] and offer disadvantaged groups, especially women and youth, opportunities to remain in traditional societies [29,80,132]. For the interviewees, the role of tourism in the face of the demographic challenge, i.e. ageing, depopulation, and emigration, is a pressing issue (Int01, Int02, Int17) and acquires particular importance. The interviewees similarly presented three visions:

1. Tourism contributes to fixing the population (Int18, Int35), slows depopulation, and increases opportunities for women and young people (Int04, Int19). It appears among all the stakeholders and in the three NtPs. Still, the municipal stakeholders are the most optimistic, especially in the municipalities that concentrate on tourist attractions and offers (Int18) and are better connected (Int23).
2. Tourism has a limited effect on demography and does not contribute to the fight against depopulation (Int01, Int05, Int21, Int33) since the increase in the population (fixation and attraction) depends on SIEs (technological and communication), as seen during the pandemic (Int01, Int21, Int29). Some recognise that tourism is an opportunity (Int39).
3. Tourism does not stop depopulation (Int02), and emigration is the cause of depopulation (Int06). It is a vision of peripheral municipal stakeholders with little tourist offer.

The demographic data between 1991 and 2020 (Figure 19) indicates that only eight municipalities have gained population, i.e. six of them are in SAPA and two of them in SH due to the deurbanisation effects of the city of Córdoba. The most touristic and best-communicated municipalities (SAPA) are gaining population. However, informal informants emphasised that the micropolitan effect is more present [127], generated by the development of supra-municipal services in the county capitals than tourism and the emigration of young people due to the impact of gentrification and urban speculation towards very small and aged municipalities.

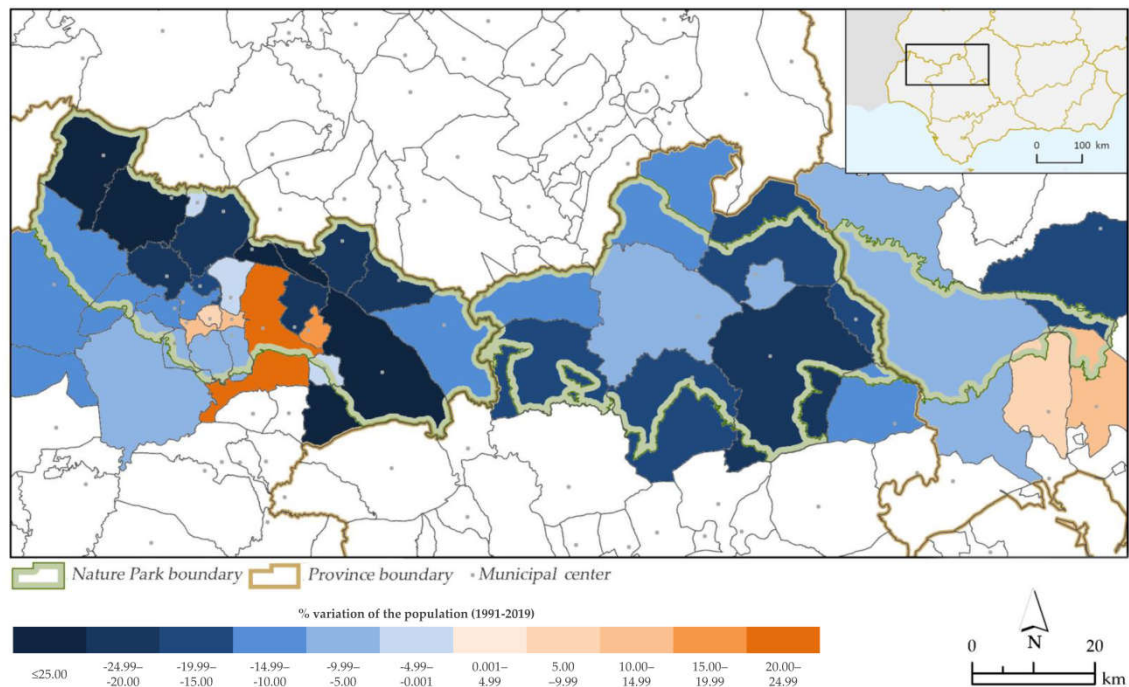


Figure 19. The variation of the population between 1991 and 2019. Source: [84]. Authors' elaboration.

Within the demographic processes, the arrival of neo-rural and foreign entrepreneurs observed in other rural spaces occupies a prominent place [147]. The interviewees emphasised foreign entrepreneurs in SAPA and SNS (Int04, Int21, Int31; neo-rural informants do not talk about themselves). While foreigners participate in traditional customs and use, the vision of the other is still present, observing them with reluctance (Int10, Int21). In addition, young returnees appear to set up companies (Int26, Int35; they do talk about themselves). It stands out that all of them are proactive and dynamic, but also few. Considering the 2015-2019 period (Figure 20), the migratory balance of the area is negative, but there are great contrasts, concentrating the growth on SAPA and well-connected municipalities. Similarly, the micropolitan effect predominates (SAPA) with the residentialisation of nearby or accessible areas and the concentration of supra-municipal services generating dynamism [127]. Immigrants (2019) from Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom represent the main group of foreigners in 9 municipalities, 7 in SAPA (Figure 20).

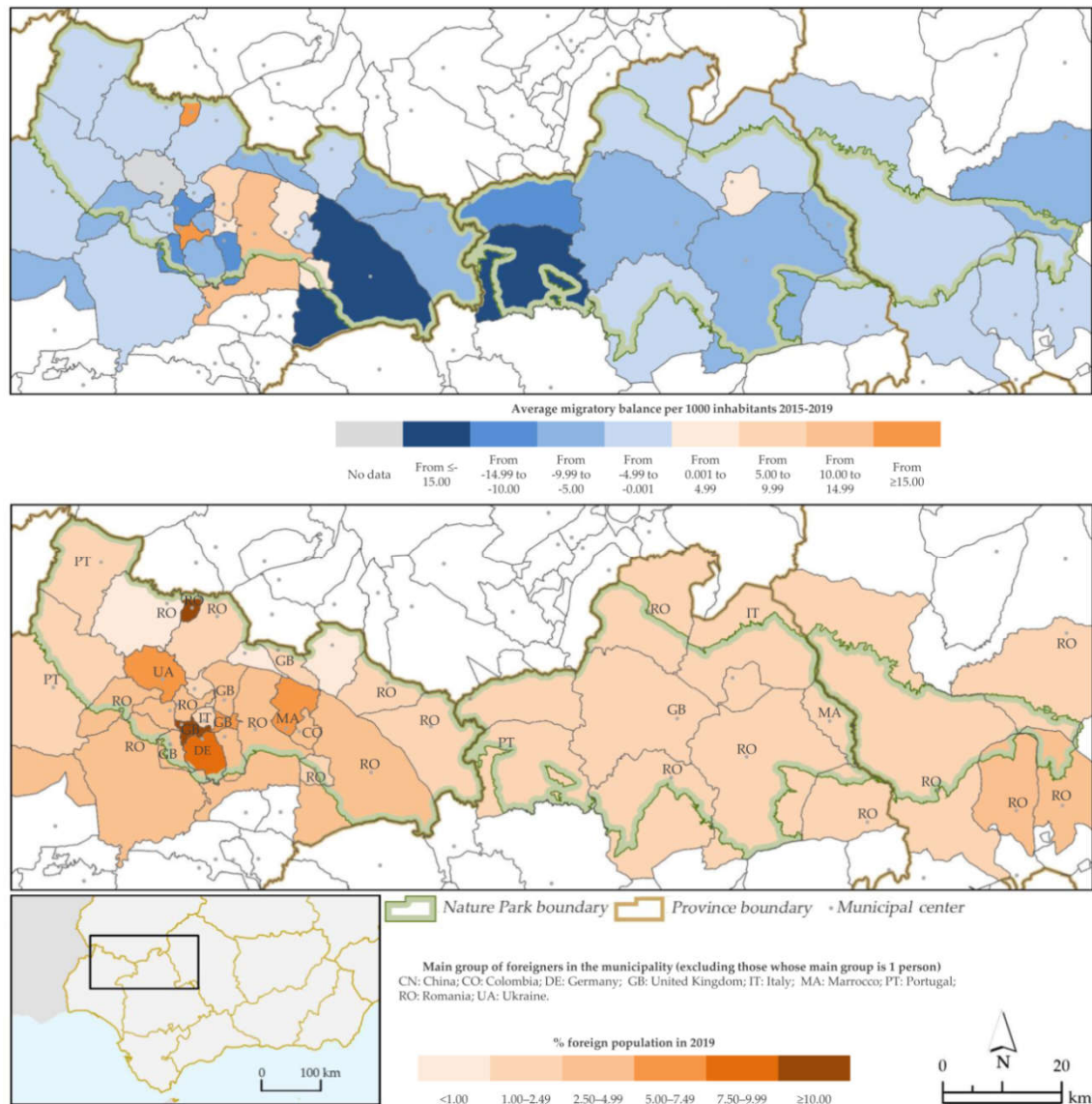


Figure 20. Migratory balance 2015-2019 per 1,000 inhabitants (upper map) and percentage of foreign population and the main group of foreigners in the municipality (lower map). Source: [85]. Authors' elaboration.

Returnees, neo-rurals, and foreigners have prior contact with the territory and decide to move. They start undertakings coinciding more with vital than economic strategies [147], with a tendency towards territorial concentration [80], taking advantage of the financing of local or rural development programs and the opening and mobility process, connecting with external markets [80]. In addition, immigrant settlements appear in abandoned or aged villages [122] with local-based tourism development [22]. Thus, the effects of tourism on demography are more limited than expected [29]. Tourism has energised demographically but has not alleviated depopulation or ageing [39]. While tourism development would sometimes coincide with a slowdown in the decline or fixation of the population, a generalised process cannot be indicated [39].

The informants do not share homogeneous views on the sociocultural dimension that allow them to be grouped according to their discourses, but rather the different topics are addressed differently. Therefore, this dimension is the most contradictory and weak [77] and appears interrelated with the economic one [77,78]. The interviewees address it in a limited way, compared to the importance it arouses among the local population [148], verified in informal interviews.

3.4. The territorial dimension of local development

Territorial cohesion is essential in local development processes [67] within the municipalities, and the territorial results in the regional contexts that the NtPs and LAGs represent [149].

In theory, the favourable framework of LEADER for developing tourist activities has been the same for all municipalities [61]. It has enabled a more balanced development of the most marginal, disadvantaged and isolated areas [35]. However, marked territorial imbalances in tourism development [30] are evident in the concentration of initiatives in some municipalities. Thus, the informants highlight the existence of imbalances in tourism development that influence local development. These imbalances are expressed by all types of informants in all the NtPs, especially in SAPA. Only the municipal stakeholders of the places with the highest tourist concentration and some peripheral ones deny them (Int02, Int18, Int28). The private supply of services is concentrated in the central areas of the three NtPs (Figure 21) in the case of the accommodation supply in 6 municipalities. Service companies, even though they are few, are distributed throughout the area. However, they tend to concentrate in the most central locations and have direct access to NtPs.

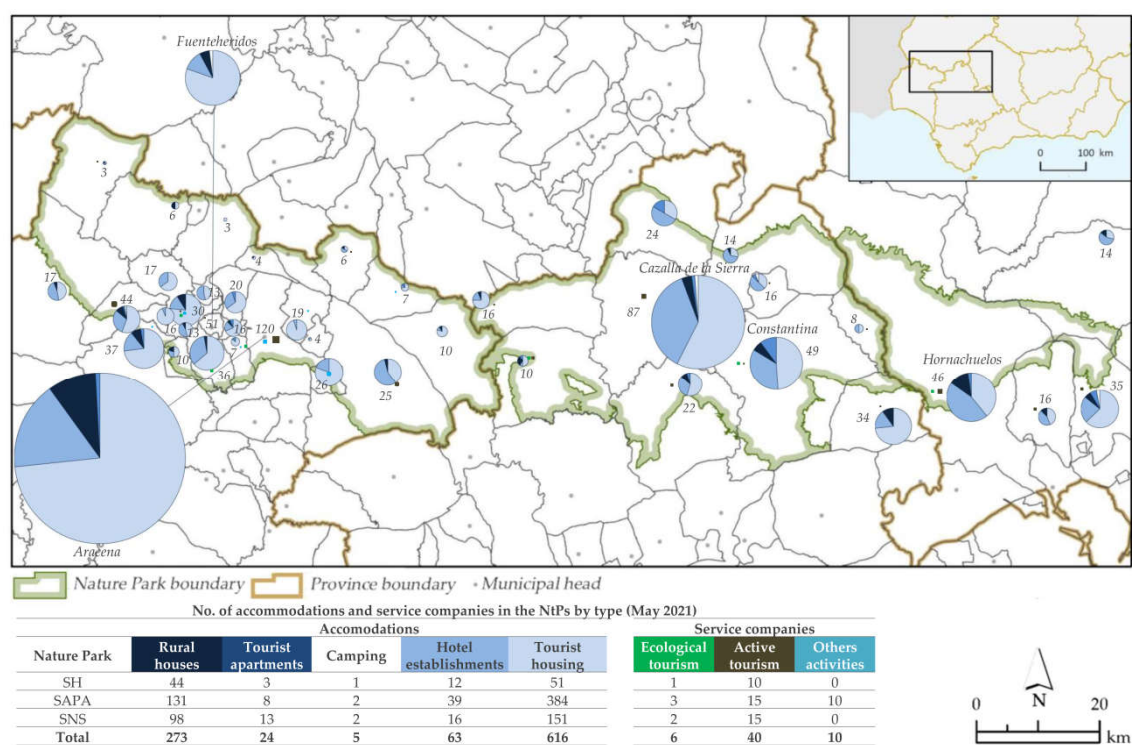


Figure 21. Tourist activities by type in the study area (2021). Source: [79]. Authors' elaboration.

The endowment of SIEs for public and social leisure and recreation use in the NtPs (Figure 22) depends on the regional administration with environmental competencies [21]. In contrast, the tourist endowment depends on the regional administration with competences in tourism [150]. From the municipal stakeholders, the non-existence of tourist information points (Int06, Int19, Int20, Int23) or actions of the NtPs that link the region with them stands out, which is accentuated in the peripheries (Int27). Public provision is more prominent and the most equipped in SNS and SAPA than in SH (Figure 22), with a greater concentration in the central areas of SAPA and SH and a more significant territorial balance in the case of SNS. However, the non-existence of feasibility studies [27] is detected with tourist actions such as the construction of tourist villages and hotels at the end of the 1980s [150] closed for more than a decade, like other SIEs of the NtPs, sometimes outsourced or managed with mixed public-private partnerships [23].

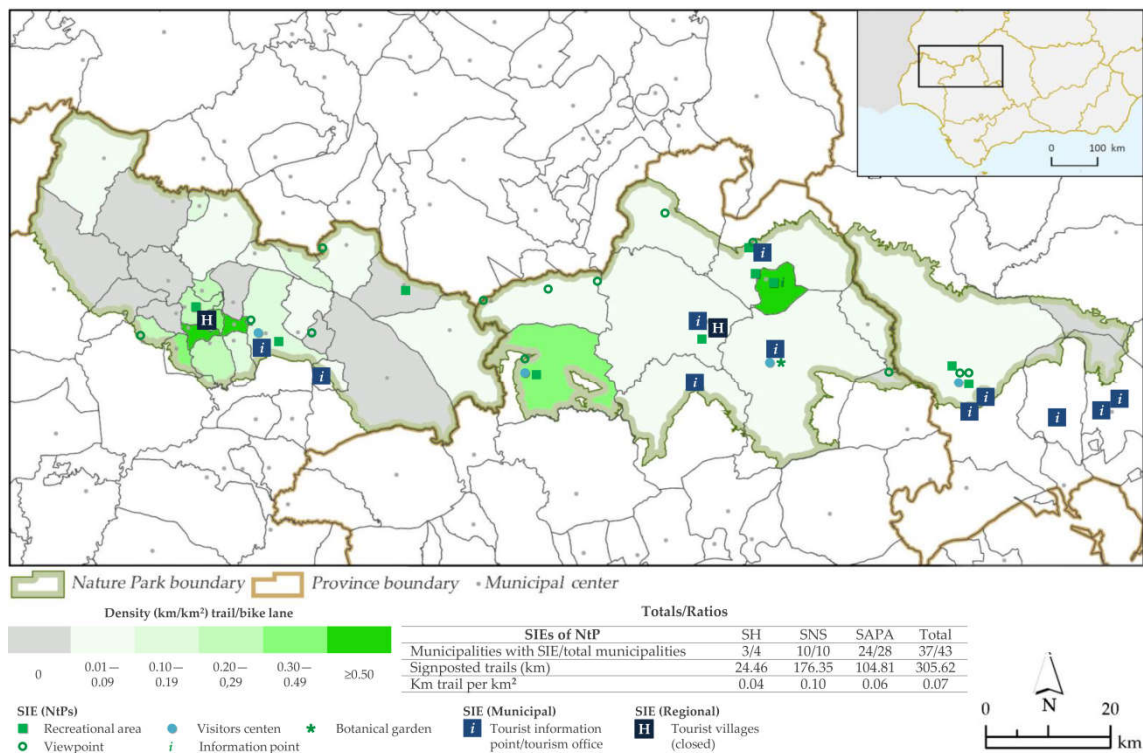


Figura 22. Public services, infrastructures and equipment in the study area (2021). Sources: [79,86,88]. Authors' elaboration.

What do the interviewees attribute this concentration of activities and SIEs to? In the first place, there is no agreement on what concentration is since, for some informants, it means concentration of the offer, while for others, it is about visitors, including hikers, in such a way that the offer does not coincide with that concentration (Figure 23). Stakeholders directly or indirectly attribute the concentration to different factors.

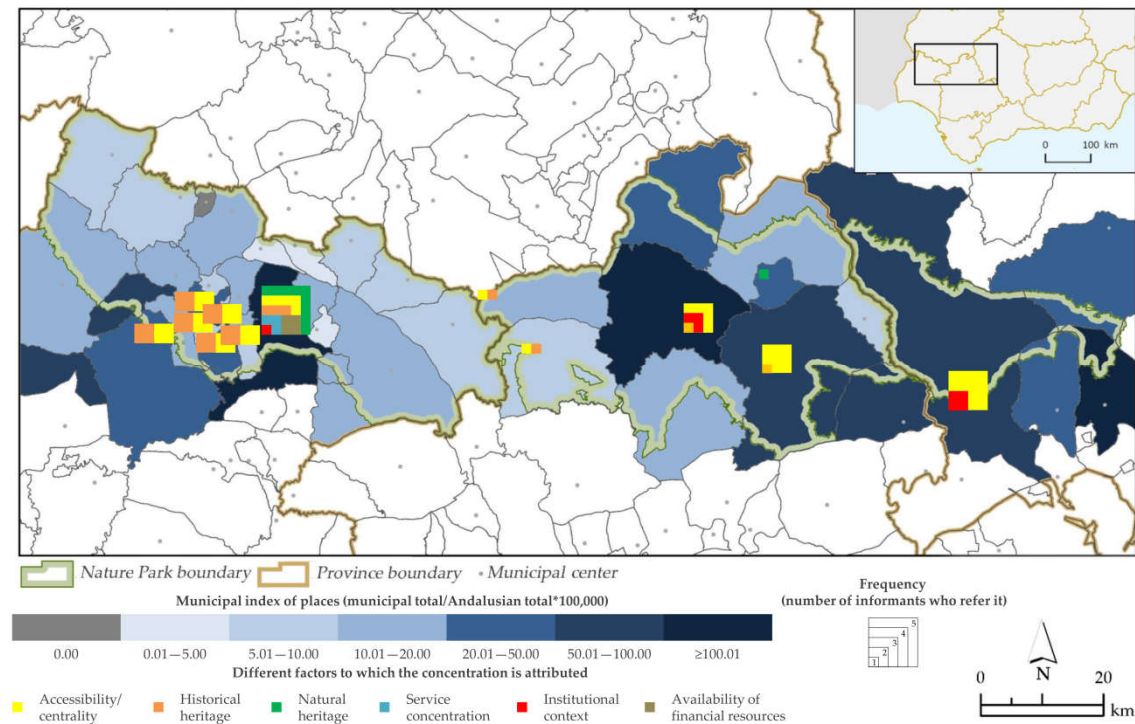


Figure 23. The concentration of tourist activity according to the stakeholders. Source: Interviews, 2021. Authors' elaboration.

The accessibility, centrality, and proximity to the issuing markets as Seville is the activity concentration factor highlighted by all the interviewees. In this regard, the NtPs directors and LAGs managers pointed out the deficiencies in the transport and communications infrastructures, i.e., shortage, state of conservation, and absence of high-capacity roads (Int03, Int04, Int09, Int21). Similarly, businessmen demand improvements to create SIEs (Int08) that add to the deficiencies or non-existence of regular transport services outside and within the NtPs (Int05, Int21, Int33, Int39). Municipal stakeholders perceived this issue differently. Since some of them are close to high-capacity communication routes or closer to provincial capitals and/or issuing centres, they do not perceive that it affects them (Int28). At the same time, it stands out among peripherals (Int06, Int07, Int27, Int30). Still, a repulsion effect due to proximity (Int04) is also detected, which has reversed during the pandemic, as the interviewees emphasised, when discovering nearby places (Int18, Int21). There is a general impression that mountain spaces are abandoned by competent administrations (Int03, Int08). Likewise, from one of the peripheral municipalities, it is highlighted that the particularities of the territory are neglected (Int23), limiting the tourist flow. It is a fact that public SIEs are developed parallel to the road and in the accesses from Seville to the NtPs [128]. Connectivity is essential for developing tourism in peripheral areas [7]. They are distinguished between disconnected peripheral destinations, which have the challenge of establishing viable connections and intermediate destinations accessible by road [7,37] with the development of leisure activities and second homes [35] in SAPA and SNS, i.e., in the municipalities best connected to Seville [91,96,123,124].

Secondly, the interviewees emphasised the presence of cultural and natural attractions. Historical heritage is highlighted by LAGs managers (Figure 2). The natural attractions are cited in SAPA and SNS, indicating their concentration and the potential of the place [7,21,40,67]. Thus, as isolation increases, "the scale of attraction must increase, as well as its uniqueness factor if viability is to be achieved and increased" [41](p. 379) since tourist environmental units need a minimum of complementary resources for destination conformation [151] to guarantee the economic viability of tourism companies [77].

The accumulation of services in the county head appears as a factor of activity concentration in SAPA, i.e. micropolitan effect and proximity services [127], and financial capacity (Int07, Int34). The deficiencies in public SIEs [7] stand out as their creation is controversial in PNA since it is incompatible with the more significant number of tourists [20].

Sometimes, the informants highlight that the concentration is because some municipalities receive more aid and support from the LAGs and have a favourable institutional context (Int10, Int13, Int30, Int38, Int39). In this regard, several interviewees emphasised the existence of municipal lobbies in the LAGs (Int23, Int27, Int30) and the weight of certain municipalities in political decision-making at the provincial and regional levels (Int30). Accordingly, favouritism, additional aid or institutional support result in a concentration (Int30), significantly harming the smallest municipalities (Int07). In contrast, the LAGs managers talk about competition between municipalities and a lack of subsidiarity due to the centre and periphery effect and autistic development. It prevents a shared vision and generates tourist micro-destinations (Int05), pointing out the municipal stakeholders of the most touristic municipalities (Int17, Int18, Int28) and a business association that the concentration of activities in municipalities exists, but "it is not planned" (Int40).

Since their implementation, the LAGs generated a joint dynamic with the NtPs to present investments and projects, favouring the best-communicated areas [21] with the concentration of projects in SAPA and SNS [152]. This concentration replicates centre and periphery models corresponding to generating municipal lobbies in the LAGs [153]. They also occur in other formal cooperation networks (municipal associations) and harm the more minor, peripheral and less accessible municipalities [67], denoting the lack of coordinated actions [101] and indicating gravitation [4]. Yet the favourable context is also given by the existence of leadership and community cohesion that decide the municipality's tourist vocation or not [67]. Tourism allows the development of tourist activities in peripheral areas related to urban spaces [6,41] and overcoming the peripherality obstacles [7,41,49]. Although politicians insist that tourism can reduce regional disparities, expectations are overstated [49], and touristic activity unequal distribution remains. Ultimately, it is "the more central and more connected actor capable of influencing its structure or its potential to grow or, on the contrary, remain static" [4] (p. 363). Additionally, there are marked imbalances in rural tourism promotion [30], with the interests of each party prevailing over the construction of a joint destination, with the DSMBR being an opportunity, as highlighted by the NtPs directors (Int03, Int08, Int09). The initiatives have been an uneven success, depending on investment, location, presence of protected resources and accessibility for tourist survival [154].

4. Conclusions

The peripheral rural spaces are territories with a bleak future [45] with fewer opportunities and a structural crisis in which natural and cultural heritage, its conservation and its enhancement have become the advantage comparison that generates diversification opportunities from tourism [54,55] to achieve local development [40,49,55].

The declaration of the three NtPs and implementation of the LAGs have been essential for developing tourism supply and demand. As a sample of a diverse rural society, stakeholders' perceptions differ and depend on their personal characteristics and external factors [155]. Agreement levels decrease from centre to periphery and are more homogeneous in SAPA and SNS than in SH. Overall, the municipalities stakeholders participating in tourism development have a more positive view of it [39,71] and establish a correlation between tourism and development. Those with more training, including those responsible for successful initiatives, provide a critical vision when considering that increasing tourism implies a decrease in natural capital [138]. A deviation of the interviewees towards the economic dimension is often observed, perceiving tourism as a panacea [61,63]. However, the environmental dimension is limited and discursive, and

the socio-cultural one is ignored. Economic and demographic trends favourable to tourism are indeed observed. Still, sometimes they are subtle [56] since limitations, risks of specialization and monoculture, environmental impacts and adverse socio-cultural effects that limit their contribution to development are also identified. In addition, tourism has not contributed to alleviating territorial inequalities, and the implemented initiatives have limited results given the concentration of activities and supply, which reinforces inequalities and centrality [18] as an expression of the paradoxes of development in the peripheries, in which some places become the periphery of the periphery. Thus, new functions and old problems coexist [2].

The expectations generated by tourism have not been met [55,56]. Thus, the results invite more reflection than optimism. Viable long-term economic activities through economic diversification that provides socioeconomic benefits to all interested parties, including employment, income, poverty reduction and services, are required [26]. In these instances, tourism complements development strategies [56] while protecting the environment in the NtPs [26]. In this regard, it is necessary to segment the tourist offer and increase the complementary offer [29], integrating traditional activities and promoting agrotourism [132,142]. Carrying capacity limits [106], despite stakeholder resistance and being unfashionable [107], and indicator systems [156] need to be established to ensure the long-term sustainability of the NtPs. Cooperation between stakeholders at different levels is necessary [157] as the formation of territorial networks and clusters [67].

The limitations detected throughout the research address a) to what extent to trust the opinions of the interviewees [76], who construct their reality based on their discourse and interests; b) the lack of systematization of the interviews with the local population due to which the socio-cultural dimension appears in a limited way; c) non-existence of statistical series at the local level focused on tourism aspects, e.g. flows or employment, that limit studies of the scope of the activity.

In future studies, it is necessary to address the fulfilment of the local community's aspirations [42] by systematizing through the analysis of the local population's perception. In addition, it is necessary to study the governance context to establish its influence on local development processes [27,158]. Finally, it is interesting to analyze gender issues, neo-rurality and neo-endogenism [48] concerning the propensity to generate local development.

Our study shows that conditions determine stakeholders' perception of local development, where reality differs from theory, and the data does not necessarily coincide with what is perceived. Processes, instruments and perceptions do not differ from others studied, and the issues are common throughout the Western world. Our contribution is using mixed methodologies to the studies of the pairing tourism and local development to establish results, achievements, failures and impacts, which can be extrapolated to other ENPs. The dominant idea about local development, focused on the economic dimension, conditions it. The paradox of basing development on endogenous resources and losing them because they are not sustainable activities or not knowing how to manage them can occur while detecting a gap in the opportunity. Once it is undertaken, companies do not necessarily head towards local development [53]. Stakeholders need to believe in local development as the objective of NtPs, since many act out of inertia, considering fashion or demand, rather than conviction and objectives achievement, requiring all participants to internalize all dimensions and effects territories to achieve this long-awaited development.

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Abbreviations

DSMBR	Dehesas de Sierra Morena Biosphere Reserve
Int	Interviews
LAGs	Local Action Groups
NtP	Nature Park
PNA	Protected Nature Areas
SAPA	Nature Park Sierra de Aracena y Picos de Aroche
SH	Nature Park Sierra de Hornachuelos
SIEs	Services, infrastructures and [types of] equipment
SNS	Nature Park Sierra Norte de Sevilla
UWGpSNS	UNESCO World Geopark Sierra Norte de Sevilla

Notes

- 1 Among the types of accommodation established by Andalusian legislation are "rural accommodation tourist housing" (VTAR) [105] and "housing for tourism purposes" (VFT) [135]. Both types with some differences between them represent accommodation without services, e.g. food, daily cleaning, or laundry. They are not legally considered business activities, but income from real estate capital. In practice they are not subject to fixed costs and only declare taxes according to their turnover.

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