

Remarkably, is that the remote Polish regions in this group can be found in different areas of Poland. PL219 Nowotarski is in the South (at the Slovak border); Nyski is in Silesia (at the German side of the 1920 border and currently bordering the Czech Republic) Swiecki and Chojnicki are Central Northern located (at the Polish side of the 1920 border) PL811 Bialski is in the East (at the Belarus border); PL821 Krosnienski is in the South East (at the Slovak border)

So, the context of land markets differs substantially. However, two of these regions Nowotarski and Krosnienski, are in the Polish Carpathians, an area that faces farmland abandonment (Kolecka *et al.*, 2017). Farmland is being replaced by forests. This is a tendency that is happening in more European regions. The more mosaic type of landscape of the Polish Carpathians (and of many other more mountainous areas) make that this process may develop faster. It is less easy to consolidate agricultural land. There are more edges between agricultural and forest areas; which also result in the keeping the land in agricultural shape is more work, as:

‘...the proximity of forests promotes natural reforestation. In areas near trees and shrubs, seed dispersal significantly triggers the early stages of succession. In areas of less intensive use, saplings and young trees or shrubs are not constantly removed, and the vegetation density increases.’(Kolecka *et al.*, 2017, 69)

Remarkably is that this is not only an issue of remote regions, but also the rural areas close to the city may face abandonment: ‘Farmlands located closer to the current provincial capital cities were more likely to be abandoned.’ (Kolecka *et al.*, 2017, 69) This is explained by the fact that people that take job in the urban labour market have less time to farm, and part-time farming may become no farming especially if the relative income from farming is low; so it especially ‘affects less productive areas’ (Kolecka *et al.*, 2017, 69). Additionally the anticipation on urban sprawl may result in abandonment of agricultural land use (Kolecka *et al.*, 2017). The physical condition as a mountain area, seems so more important than the remoteness in the development towards farmland abandonment. Based on this it may be expected that infrastructure investments to counter remoteness, or the creation of jobs outside the agricultural sector will not stop farmland abandonment.

#### 5.1.2.2 Alentejo

In Portugal, there are very few young farmers. In all Portuguese regions at least 50% of the farms and 30% of the land is held by farmers over 65 years of age. The old farming population is not a new phenomenon. Two decades ago Rodrigo and Moreira (2001) already analysed this issue and showed that attempt to rejuvenate the farming population by agricultural training courses did not result in many young people attending them. A ‘structuralist dualism and a bifurcated landownership pattern’ (Rodrigo and Moreira, 2001, 245) played a role in this. Rodrigo and Moreira (2001) especially referred to Alentejo remote regions, in which the ‘*latifundist* economic reality’ (Rodrigo and Moreira, 2001, 245) still existed. *Latifundia* refers to Roman large farms, but it is a concept that is also used in broader meaning large land holdings and the unequal social structure that comes with this (Szelenyi, 2011; De Almeida, 2013). Alentejo is a region ‘where land and property have historically been defining features of the socio-economic system’ (Edwards, 2011, 79). There has not been much change in the structure of a few very landholders and a large majority of landless farm workers between the 18<sup>th</sup> century and 1974 (De Almeida, 2013). Alentejo is the traditional bread basket of Portugal,

and has a history of large farms with many landless labourers who lived in poor conditions (Williams, 1962; De Almeida, 2013). Up to the revolution in 1974, the traditional situation did not evolve, but flourished 'on the regime's autarkic policies shielding the agricultural sector from competition as well as the employment of low cost temporary labourers' (Edwards, 2011, 78). Furthermore, it was not necessary to invest in machinery since the labour was so cheap. After the revolution, many young people left the region leaving older generations. At EU accession, '...Alentejo's agriculture had suffered forty years of underinvestment compared to its neighbours' (Edwards, 2011, 86). According to Edwards, Alentejo is subject to

'...a widespread view among the mostly Lisbon based elite that the regions are at the service of the nation rather than the other way round and that since Portugal is a small country regional development does not really matter' (Edwards, 2011, 80).

Due to its history, the middle class is small in Alentejo. Part of the region is not so remote as most of the region. Here some new entrants to farming operate, who usually rely on marketing to Lisbon as there is no local market for their, usually organic, products (Dolci and Perrin, 2018).

In a case study on young farmers (YF) also using a focus group (FG) the land market provides a large barrier:

'Access to land has been acknowledged as the most widespread barrier for YF. According to seven of the 10 interviewed, and to the consensus opinion of the FG, the land with the best soil is difficult to access by YF and remains in the hands of family farms. When such land enters the market, prices are extremely high, which is partly driven by competing demand by foreigners and national financial investment groups searching for productive and irrigated land.' (Eistrup *et al.*, 2019, 8)

Although Alentejo is dominated by large scale latifundia type of farms, there are smaller areas with smaller scale farms. These are sometimes characterised as 'lifestyle farmers' as 'production income' is not the main driver for their decisions (Pinto-Correia *et al.*, 2016). These farmers are often new entrants and are not so receptive for formal requirements including policy instruments and regulations (Pinto-Correia *et al.*, 2016). Access to land is difficult for them 'as demand for these small-scale farms is high' (Pinto-Correia *et al.*, 2017, 141) 'While the productive function of these small farms has decreased, their market value has gone up.' (Pinto-Correia *et al.*, 2017, 138).

The Alentejo NUTS 3 regions have very high scores on the EEA (2019) defined land cover flow 'withdrawal from farming' between 2000 and 2018. Baixo Alentejo has (with 25,185 hectares) the highest withdrawal from farming score of all NUTS 3 regions in the EU. Alentejo Litoral (4<sup>th</sup>), Alentejo Central (5<sup>th</sup>) and Alto Alentejo (11<sup>th</sup>) have also a high land cover flow 'withdrawal from farming'. It must be noted that Baixo Alentejo has also the highest score (of all NUTS 3 regions in the EU) on internal agricultural conversions. More refined analysis of these figures, which are based on remote sensing using satellite images, showed the following.

Almost 90% of the withdrawal from farming in Baixo Alentejo is with woodland creation. In relation to internal agricultural conversions, it is predominantly (over 43 thousand hectares

between 2000 and 2018 according to the EEA land cover statistics (EEA, 2019)) the conversion from arable land to permanent crops.

This fits to the picture of the transformation of Alentejo as previous bread basket of Portugal, towards an area with olive trees. These high dynamics in land uses are not being reflected by a high dynamic on the land market. Furthermore, due to mechanisation there is no need any more for farmworkers, so the area is facing population decline (De Almeida, 2013). There are a few new owners, urban professionals, who aim to spend some free time in the countryside. However these landowners are no longer the local elite known to the inhabitants, but pretty much ignore village life as they have an extensive network in the city (De Almeida, 2013). So, the developments in the land market are not positive in regards to both the access to land for new generations as for the revival of village live towards a new sense of place to embark on a process of ruralisation.

In **Conclusion**, the remote regions in this type face issues of population decline and have a large inequality of landholdings. This means that most of the land is controlled by a few farms and most of the farms control few lands. In this context, continuation of farming is not self-evident, as transfer of farmland to woodlands, may develop naturally. The Alentejo region shows that large changes in land use do not always have the consequence that unequal relationships will be addressed. It is just that landowners take decisions to exploit their lands in other ways. In many of these regions, there has been a large outflux of population, which implies that new beginnings may provide new opportunities for novel types of farmers. However, access to land is not easy in this context. Having alternative farming styles without much emphasis on boosting production also means that market powers on the land market are limited.

### 5.1.3 Remote regions—non-mountainous—Low QoG —All ratios of DP/Rent (RE-N-L-A)

**RE-N-L-A** (Remote Rural and Intermediate areas—mountains < 50% of area—Low QoG (<-0.669)—All DP/Rent)  
 BG312 Montana; BG313 Vratsa; BG325 Silistra; BG333 Shumen; BG334 Targovishte; EL511 Evros; EL523 Kilkis; EL622 Kerkyra; EL633 Ileia; HR033 Zadarska zupanija; HR036 Istarska zupanija; HR045 Koprivnicko-krizevacka zupanija; HR046 Medimurska zupanija; HR048 Viroviticko-podravaska zupanija; HU223 Zala; HU232 Somogy; HU312 Heves; HU313 Nógrád; HU322 Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok; HU332 Békés; ITF62 Crotone; ITG28 Oristano; ITI1A Grosseto; RO116 Salaj; RO212 Botosani; RO225 Tulcea; RO317 Teleorman

#### Box 5 RE-N-L-A (Remote Rural and Intermediate areas—mountains < 50% of area—Low QoG (<-0.669)—All DP/Rent)

Non-mountainous remote regions have often physically the potential to consolidate land. Lower Quality of government may result in that weaker parties are less well protected by the state. Based on these conditions land grabbing can be found here. Although Most of these areas are located in the South-East of Europe (Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary and Romania) and some are in Italy. In these areas 61.7 % of the land is used for agriculture in average, which is higher than in any other type of regions. There are, however, NUTS 3 regions of other types (such as Brindisi, which is 'urban'), which have over 90% of their land in