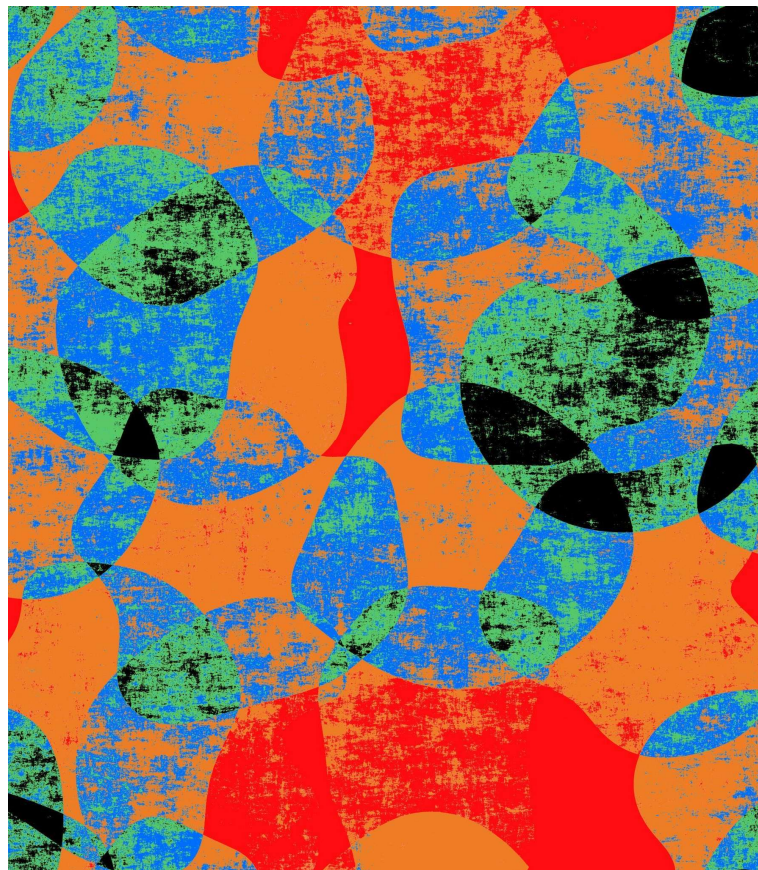


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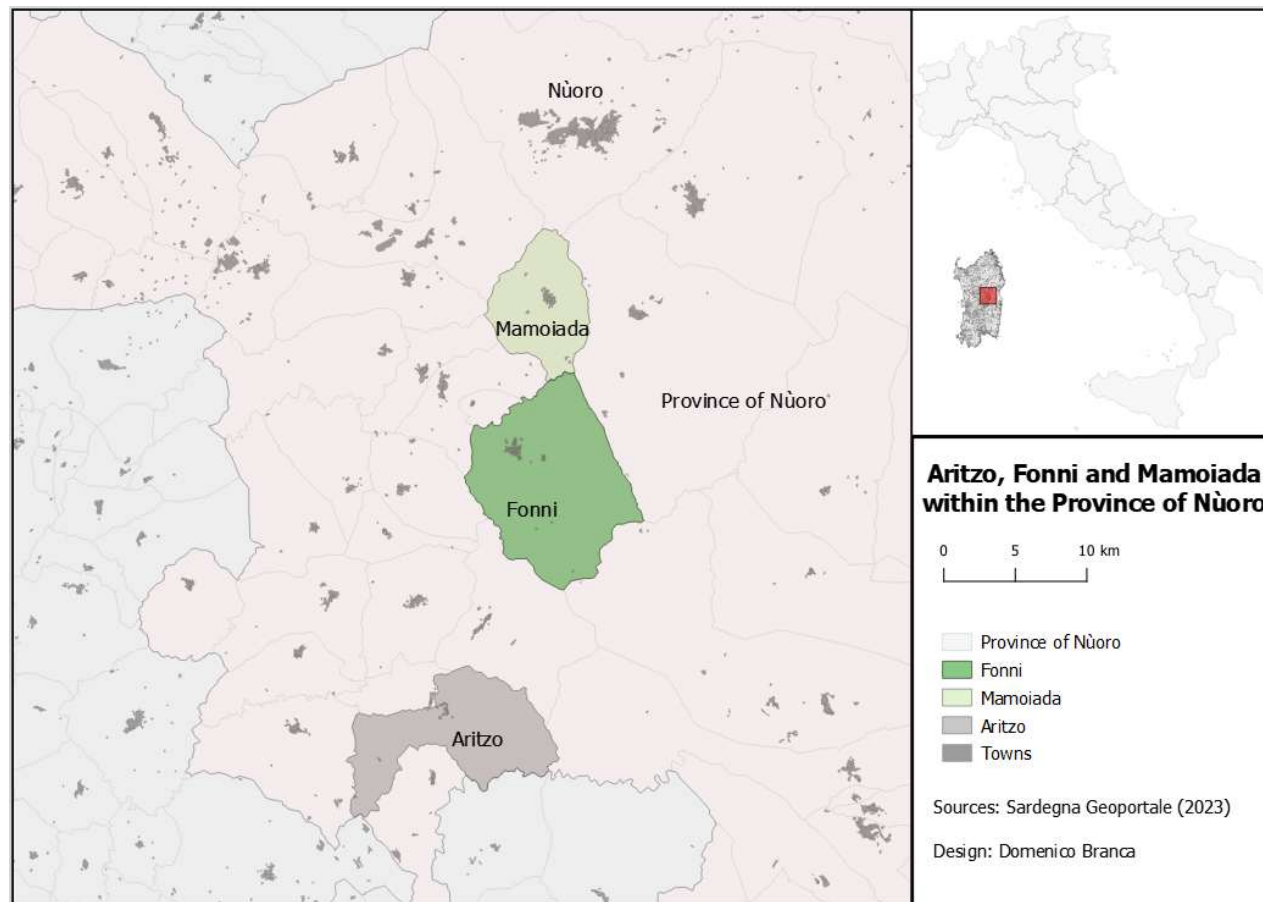
Herigitisation, tourism and depopulation: Economies of Sardinian mountain towns

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Aims

This study aims to outline a concise cultural history of local economies from the 19th century to the present day, focusing on three significant cases: Aritzo, Fonni, and Mamoiada.



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18 municipalities of Sardinia



Methodology

Methodology: combining historical research and ethnographic techniques.

Data collection: reviewing of primary sources related to the local economy, demographic evolution, and migration patterns to understand the significant economic changes.

Periods: 19th century, characterized by a subsistence-oriented economy (Tore, 1975); second half of the 20th century, marked by significant migration and a progressive demographic decline; 1970s-1980s, cultural heritage recovery and local production.

Methodology

Ethnographic techniques: participant observation during carnival celebrations (at Aritzo), and informal conversations with residents.

Selection: three representative cases: Aritzo, Fonni, and Mamoiada (Nùoro, Sardinia) for their economic, tourist, and local food production significance.

Nature- based tourism, cultural heritage, and depopulation

Nature-based tourism (NBT) refers to tourism that focuses on experiencing and interacting with the natural environment (Simonicca, 1997; Stronza, 2001; Buckley, 2016).

NBT and slow movements; (Wearing et al., 2012).

NBT and cultural heritage as a means generate economic opportunities, often in response to socio-economic crises, such as depopulation scenarios.

Historical region: Barbagia de Belvì

Elevation: ca 800 meters

Population: 1184 inhabitants (ISTAT).

Historical economy: mountainous products, *neviere* (snow storage structures) and ice production, since the 17th century (Filigheddu et al., 1991). Chestnuts, hazelnuts, and walnuts.

Forestry activities and wood-related craftsmanship (Angius, 1832-1848 [2006]; Maxia, 2003; Pantaleoni and Fiori, 2006).

Transhumance (between autumn and spring) to Monreale, Sulcis, and Campidano di Cagliari. Trade timber and mountain products: Goceano and Gallura (Angius, 1832-1848 [2006]; Le Lannou, 1979; Ortu, 1988).



The Barbagia de Belvì within the Province of Nuoro

- Aritzo
- Belvì
- Gadoni
- Meana Sardo
- Province of Nuoro
- Municipalities

0 5 10 km

Sources
Sardegna Geoportale (2023)

Design:
Domenico Branca



Results (a)

19th and 20th century: Renowned destination for mountain tourism;

After the 1960s: significant socio-cultural and economic changes and a considerable population decline.

Traditional productions, such as snow-related activities, vanished, but a local product called *carapigna*, a lemon sorbet;



Results (a)

Since 1972, the *Sagra della Castagna* (Chestnut Festival) has been celebrated in October;

Significant celebrations related to the annual cycle, such as St Anthony's Bonfire and Carnival (with the traditional *Mumutzones* mask);

Tourist events: "Autunno in Barbagia"

Ecomuseo della Montagna Sarda (Ecomuseum of the Sardinian Mountains).

Results (a)

Compared to the past, tourism in Aritzo has lost relevance, and many of the town's hotels either no longer operate or have been repurposed as reception centres for migrants.

Conversations with residents in January and February 2023 revealed a widespread perception of danger in this situation and structural problems during winter, as experienced this year due to heavy snowfall, which caused power outages in the town for several hours.

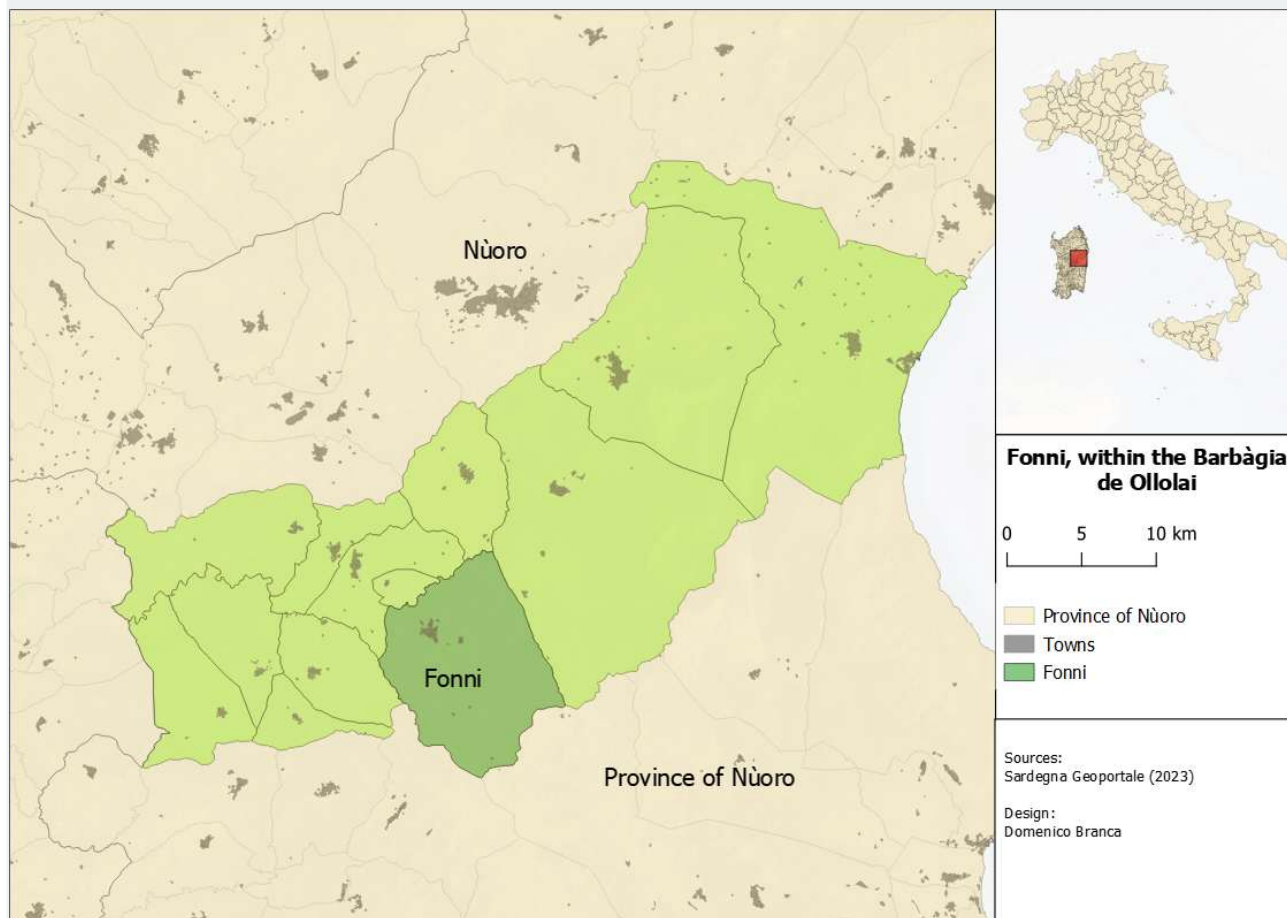
Historical region: Barbagia de Ollolai

Elevation: 1000 meters

Population: ca 3600 inhabitants (ISTAT)

Historical economy: sheep and goat farming (including dairy production), pig farming, and to a lesser extent, cattle farming.

Weaving production was traded, along with horticultural products and livestock, during the transhumance period towards Barigadu and the Campidano of Oristano and Cagliari (Angius 1832-1848 [2006]; Murru Corrigan 1990).



Results (B)

After the 1960s: significant socio-cultural and economic changes;

Current main productions: agro-pastoral, chestnuts, vineyards, orchards, and olive groves, according to the altitude of different areas

Winter tourism: A significant source of income; Bruncu Spina Ski Resort;

St Anthony's Bonfire and Carnival (*Sos Urthos* and *Sos Buttudos*), and the implementation of a hiking network, positions Fonni as one of the most important tourist destinations on the island.



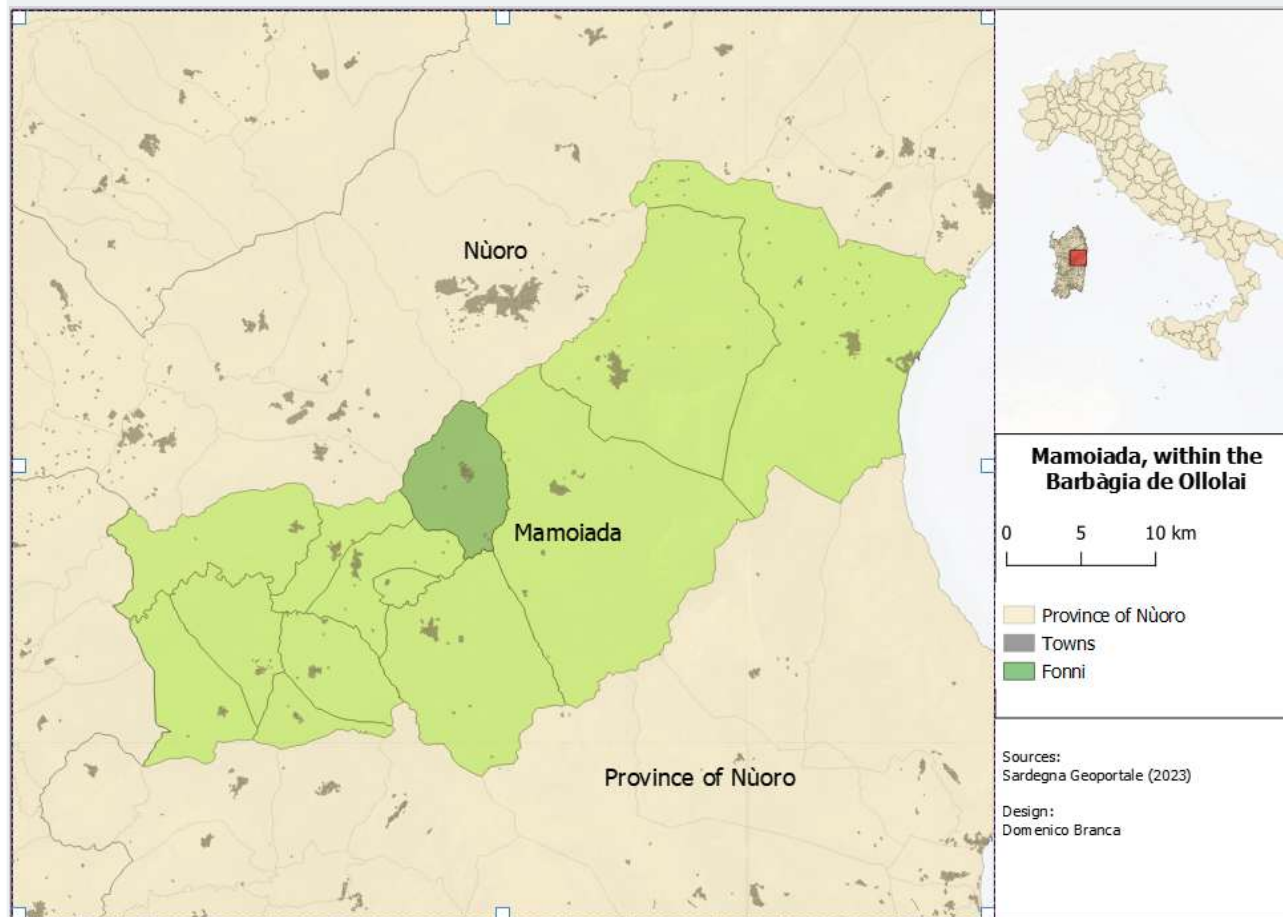
Historical region: Barbagia de Ollolai

Elevation: 643 meters

Population: ca
2560 inhabitants (ISTAT);

Historical economy: sheep and goat farming (including dairy production), pig farming, and to a lesser extent, cattle farming; apiculture;

Local products were mainly traded towards the eastern coast of Baronia and Barbagia. Interestingly, according to sources, wine production was considered limited and poor quality (Angius 1832-1848 [2006]).



Results (c)

Current economy: viticulture, with products of remarkable quality and distribution locally and internationally;

Cultural tourism: ethnographic *heritage*, *Museo delle Maschere Mediterranee di Mamoiada* (Museum of Mediterranean Masks of Mamoiada), one of the most important traditional mask museums in Europe;

Overtourism: (Milano et al., 2019: 1), although concentrated during a few days (L'Unione Sarda, 2022);

Mamoiada is starting to witness the emergence of a type of food and wine tourism that connects the knowledge of the territory with local productions through visits to vineyards and tastings of local products.



Discussion

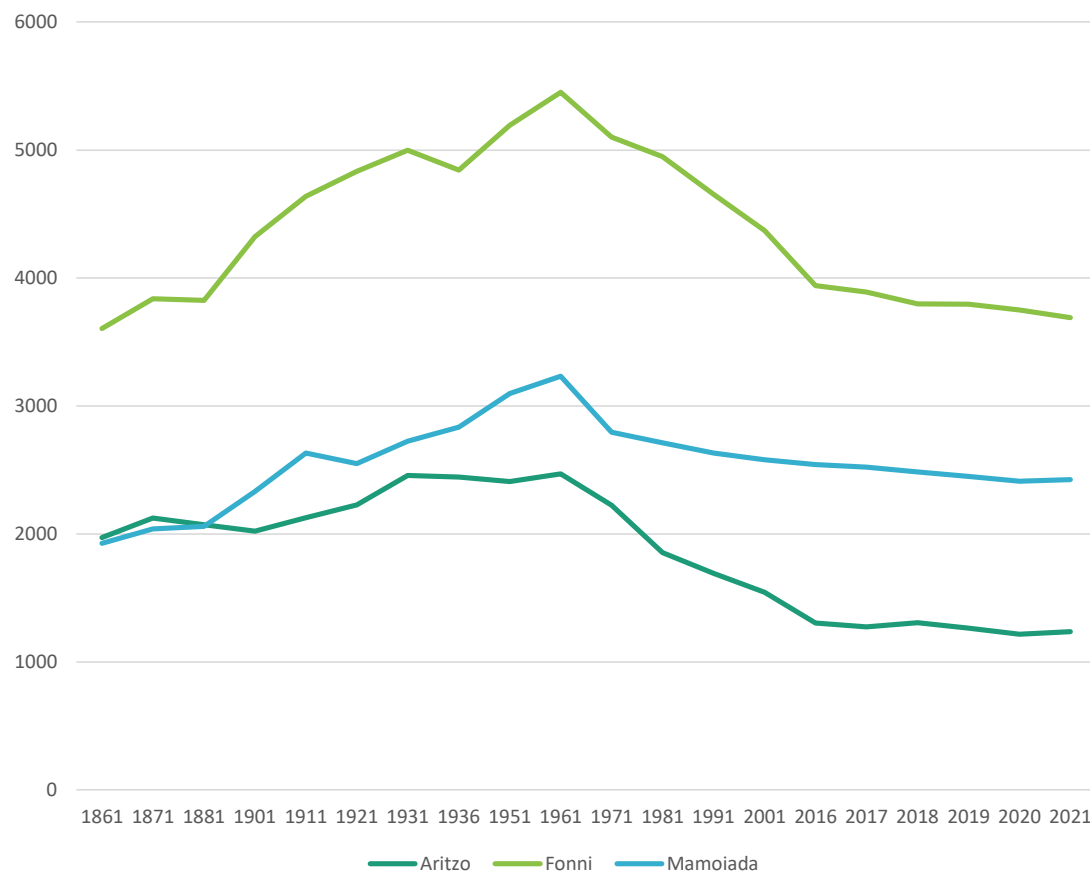
19th century: local economies were mainly based on subsistence farming and agro-pastoral production, taking advantage of local geographic and climatic features. Transhumance practices and trade relations facilitated regional exchange, consumption and social connections;

Discussion

20th century: A period of significant socio-cultural and economic changes, particularly from the 1950s onwards, when emigration led to ongoing depopulation and significant demographic decline.

1970s and 1980s: local cultural heritage has been revived by rediscovering carnivals and traditional productions increasingly oriented towards the global market (sa carapigna or torrone [nougat], have transformed artisanal to entrepreneurial dimensions).

Fig. 4 - La Popolazione residente, Aritzo, Fonni, Mamoiada, 1861-2021 (Fonte: ISTAT, www.sardegna-statistiche.it; www.comuni-italiani.it).



Discussion

Currently: A rediscovery of the Sardinian mountains, mainly through nature-based tourism and trekking, which is interested in local productions and the area's cultural heritage.

However, despite efforts to valorize cultural heritage and implement tourism strategies, depopulation remains a strongly present phenomenon.

Conclusions

The rediscovery of Sardinia's mountain areas as tourist destinations based on nature, local gastronomic and artisanal productions, and ethnographic tourism;

The emergence of this tourism offering in response to growing demand from tourists interested in sustainable experiences, outdoor tourism, local products, and cultural traditions;

The relatively recent but active phenomenon of tourism development in Sardinia's mountain areas;

The severe depopulation problem faced by the villages in the inland areas of Sardinia;

The origin of this depopulation phenomenon in the 1960s; The ongoing challenge posed by depopulation to the economic and social sustainability of local communities and mountain regions.

Thank you for your attention

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Credits

Fiume Cedrino: <https://uninuoro.it/laboratorio-di-promozione-del-territorio/#lg=1&slide=0>

Sa Carapigna 1: <https://www.sardegna.com/it/blog/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/carapigna.jpg>

Sa Carapigna 2: https://scontent.fprg5-1.fna.fbcdn.net/v/t1.18169-9/10387222_10153124250113362_101337968966272030_n.jpg?nc_cat=100&ccb=1-7&nc_sid=9267fe&nc_ohc=7hIJ6T8abqMAX_pjViO&nc_ht=scontent.fprg5-1.fna&oh=00_AfDSJgYi2M0WJqSOPVVd1mbTN6hlcV9LKzC6mMdsGbh77A&oe=64A8D80A

Bruncu Spina: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruncu_Spina_ski_area#/media/File:BruncuSpina.jpg

Mumutzones: Photo Domenico Branca (January 2023).

Museo delle Maschere di Mamoiada: https://www.bluelionguides.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/screenshot-www.facebook.com-2019.11.07-16_05_34.jpeg