

# **SOCIO-CULTURAL IDENTITY AND GLOBALIZATION: A LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUE AND ITS REPRESENTATIONS IN PORTUGAL**

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**Abstract:** The need to reaffirm the socio-cultural and other facets of diversity of places and regions in order to make them economically and culturally “more competitive” on the globalised market of goods and services has been widely accepted in regional and local development policies in Portugal, but much more so rhetorically than in operational terms. This largely reflects the fact that policies, as well as their instruments, do not rely on empirical evidence of the changing character of socio-cultural aspects of territorial identity. There are virtually no records regarding representations of territorial identity features (and related policy issues) by local/regional development stakeholders, both individual and institutional ones. The problem is that appropriate conceptualisations and analytical tools for comprehensive identification and assessing of various dimensions local/regional identity have been lacking. This paper brings forward a conceptual and methodological framework for the study of changing socio-cultural and other major features of local identities in the context of globalized economy and culture. The evidence obtained from a field survey of Portuguese local development agents’ knowledge, attitudes and practice in relation to local/regional socio-cultural identity as a development issue is also presented and discussed in the paper.

## **Introduction**

The concern for the diversity and autonomy of regional and local identity has been increasingly voiced across social sciences over the last decade (Agnew 2000; Haartsen et al. 2000; Massey and Jets 1995; Amin and Thrift 1994; Hadjimikalis 1994; Massey 1991) and has gained a strategic importance in regional development policies and programmes, especially in the peripheral and lagging regions and countries of the European Union. One of major arguments has been that an increased competitiveness of localities and regions on the globalised market of goods, services and ideas, can be decisive for achieving the sustainable "local development engineering" (Cosgrove 1998; Commission européenne 1994).

In Portugal, it has been argued that globalisation, together with the enlargement of the EU, is imposing difficult challenges because "it has brought about elements and factors that are unfavourable to both inter- and intra-regional social and economic cohesion", though, at the same time, "it is essential to attract the foreign investments that will enable diversification of the regional economy and promote its high quality and stability, including social and environmental sustainability" (MP 1999, Chapter I: 52; 69). In this context, it has been widely accepted that the valorisation of territorial identity is essential in regional and local development strategies and programmes, especially in rural areas.

However, the need to (re)affirm the identity of places and regions in Portugal has been promoted much more rhetorically than in terms of practice at the field level. It is argued in this paper that this gap is due to the lack of appropriate concepts and analytical tools for the understanding of local identity as a development issue. The paper brings forward a recent experience in creating a conceptual and methodological framework for the study of local identity and globalisation, as well as the first findings of an exploratory field-research on this topic in rural Portugal.

## **Policy concerns and implementation limits**

### Common rhetoric

There has hardly been a regional and local development strategy or programme for rural Portugal, that would not warn about the loss of identity as a manifestation of social and

economic depression and marginalisation of places and regions,<sup>1</sup> or that would not emphasise that combating negative and attracting desirable effects of globalisation require that special attention should be given to local identity.

For example, in the final document adopted at the First European Conference on Local Development and Social Cohesion, held in Serpa, Portugal, in 1995, it was highlighted that "the valorisation of local cultural identity and environmental protection should become useful instruments in creating new activities, generators of employment and retaining and attracting people" (CEDLCS 1995, 4). Likewise, at the National Assemblies and Fairs of Local and Regional Development Agents, held in Amarante, in 1998 and in Tavira in 2001, strong quests were made in favour of the "valorisation of cultural identity", "building local self-esteem", "strengthening local diversity", "encouraging community feeling", "mobilising active local citizenship" and "enabling decentralised development" (Animar 1998), as well as calling for "recreation of local identities in all of its dimensions" in order to "combat exclusion and massification generated by globalisation" (Animar 2001).

Along the same lines, the objectives of the EU Initiative LEADER II, strongly promoted in Portugal, referred to the need to valorise "territorial potentials" and "richness of regional heritage". Moreover, in order to become eligible for financing, local development projects have had to incorporate "the sensitisation of the population about territorial identity and prosperity" (DGDR 1997, 218-219). The most recent example of the pro-identity rhetoric can be found in the National Regional Development Plan 2000-2006 where it is argued that "harmony between modernity and tradition mean, both territorially and geostrategically, combining the generalised cosmopolitan living patterns with the valorisation of collective identity" (MP 1999 Chapter III: 10).

In short, the need to care about identity has been accepted as the *conditio sine qua non* for further development of the Portuguese rural economy and society in the context of globalisation, or, as Albino suggested, "local identity must be operationalised into a development resource ... The strategy of local development should be based on the

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<sup>1</sup> Most rural areas in Portugal have suffered from the declining of small-scale agriculture, under-utilisation or abandonment of cultivable land; lacking investments in economic and social infrastructure and services and, especially, in productive activities, as well as from the continuous weakening of demographic vitality and depletion of endogenous human resources, often referred to as "human desertification" All this has been accompanied by fading cultural traditions and adoption of new identities. (Animar 2001, 1998; Barreto 2000; Roca 1998; Cavaco 1992; Bandeira 1991).

appreciation of the ancestral typicality as a means of encouraging further evolution of new local innovations" (1997: 113).

### Methodological constraints

In order to reconcile local development needs, potentials and contexts with global conditions, a comprehensive recognition of the origin and nature of the identity of places and regions is required. However, the problem is that the concept of local identity has not been transformed into an analytical category, equipped by methods and tools for recording and understanding the nature of identity features and assessing the causes and direction of their change.

The notion of local identity can imply a great diversity of meanings, such as 'unique properties' of places and regions, their 'characteristics and particularities', 'natural and cultural heritage', 'endogenous potentials' and 'comparative (dis)advantages'. Most often the actual content, scope and value judgements behind such generalisations tend to remain unclear and biased, thus inadequate for development policy and strategy design, or for development planning and project formulation purposes.

If it is unclear what the identity of a place and region means in factual, practical and verifiable terms, that is, beyond the above-mentioned, fairly generic designations, how can one determine what aspect of identity needs to be strengthened, preserved, diversified, or made 'more competitive', so that it becomes a factor of development? Furthermore, how to monitor and evaluate changes in local identity, and against which reference points? Which quantitative benchmarks should be used to distinguish, compare, or predict desirable from unwanted changes in local identity? And, even if the nature of local development issues at stake and the needs for change were identified, who are the legitimate 'guardians' of local identity, that is, which institutions or individuals are capable, or entitled, to cope with forces of globalisation locally?

As far as the global-local nexus is concerned, at least two important analytical limitations need to be highlighted. First, the macroscopic perspective has prevailed in the majority of interpretations of the consequences of globalisation, while there has been too little insight at the local level. In fact, though "commentators seem sure that there is a 'dialectic' between the global and local, that in some sense what counts as the local has been transformed by globalisation" (Massey 1991, in Amin and Thrift 1994:1), most usually the empirical evidence has not been sought at levels lower than a single or groups of countries.

Interpretations based on primary records of the effects of globalisation at lower, intra-country, regional and local levels, have been underrepresented, if not completely neglected.<sup>2</sup>

The second limitation has to do with the “underestimation at present of the literature on the local-global nexus in terms of the role of people and their organisations as social agents affecting change” (Hadjimichalis, 1994: 249). Indeed, virtually no effort has been made to divert from a tendency to interpret changes in economic, cultural, political and other spheres of life primarily from the perspective of systems and institutions, and to ignore the fact that every institutional setting is run and/or used by individual stakeholders and that, consequently, all representations of local identity are necessarily subjective.

By removing the above-mentioned limitations, firmer grounds could be created for a more profound, empirical and policy-relevant understanding of, as Amin and Thrift asserted, “the continued salience of places as settings for social and economic existence, and for forging identities, struggles, and strategies of both a local and global nature” (1994: 9).

### **Searching for evidence**

In the framework of a research project on globalisation and local development in Portugal<sup>3</sup> an effort was made to detect the presence and nature of changing local identity in rural areas and to gain insight about the role of development stakeholders<sup>4</sup> in that change. To this end, an exploratory, nation-wide pilot-survey on knowledge, attitudes and practice (KAP) of local development stakeholders in relation to local identity and globalisation was carried out. The conceptualisation of the KAP questionnaire used in the survey resulted from an attempt to operationalise the concept of local identity, as outlined hereunder.

### **The KAP questionnaire**

The objectives of the first KAP questionnaire was to bring records of the development stakeholders' representations of the identity of territories on which they operate and of their

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<sup>2</sup> True, geographers, sociologists, industrial economists and business analysts, political scientists and others have explored effects of globalisation on local cultural identities, local business strategies, local industrial agglomerations, local political struggles, etc. (Amin and Thrift 1994), but such contributions tend to cover only sporadic and isolated cases (mostly the "success-stories"), rely on secondary sources of information and remain confined to monodisciplinary interpretations.

<sup>3</sup> The project started in 1999 as part of a long-term research programme of the Applied Social Science Research Centre at the *Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias*, Lisbon, and in the framework of the Plurianual Financial Support Programme of the Foundation for Science and Technology of Portugal.

views about local changes attributable to globalisation, as well as about their role in valorising local identity features.

The working definition of the concept of local identity introduced in the questionnaire was that "it represents the set of cultural, social, economic, technological and other specificities of a territory that make it different from other territories". Such broad, value-free, designation was introduced in order to maximise conditions for the spontaneity of answers from different stakeholders and, thus, for bringing more light to the issue of "whose identity or identities are we talking about, and who determines the regional identity of an area" (Groote et al. 2000: 2).

Likewise, in parts of the KAP questionnaire focussed on global effects on local identity and development, the notion of globalisation was generically introduced as "a growing interdependence, at the world level, of tendencies, problems, values, life-styles and decisions".<sup>5</sup> It was hoped that it would minimise possible respondents' perceptions of the 'global' as everything that is 'not local', in view of the fact that "depending on the degree of inclusion- exclusion of each place in the world economy, 'global' can refer to the next city and region or the actual economy and society" (Hadjimicalis 1994:241).

In order to facilitate response on such complex concepts and issues, the questions were closed, with multiple-choice answers, and the concept of local identity was presented in an extensively disaggregated manner. The step-wise process of disaggregation consisted of itemisation of local identity features, their testing in the field, and creation of a roster of local identity components. The first itemisation was inspired by concepts of the 'global sense of place' (Massey 1991), the 'contestation of place' (Massey and Jess 1995), the 'regions in the minds' (Agnew 1999), the 'claimed rural identities' (Haartsen et al. 2000) and the 'glocalisation', neologism which refers to "the accrued articulation of local territories with the world economy, stressing the persistence of spatiality, inscription of economic social and cultural phenomena." (Benko 2000:14).

The scope of itemisation was established on the basis of theoretical arguments and empirical accounts such as that, in spite of the global pressures, the "cultural landscapes remain our

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<sup>4</sup> Here the term "development stakeholders" designates all individuals or groups of people and institutions that directly or indirectly stand to gain or lose given a particular development course or activity (Roca 1999).

<sup>5</sup> The notion of globalisation appears in the KAP questionnaire disaggregated in several of its most obvious manifestations, such as those related to financial capital and investments, markets and competitiveness, communication technologies, consumption patterns and lifestyles, and civic conscientiousness and critical citizenship (Grupo de Lisboa 1994: 46)

unwitting autobiography" (Rubinstein 1996:23 ); that "contrary to the most sober predictions, territories with their specificities are not erased from the economic fluxes of mundialisation", and that the "regional richness" has been guaranteed given that material and immaterial specificities are "territorially anchored" (Benko 2000: 12-14); that 'verticalities', and not anymore 'horizontalites', increasingly produce 'hegemonic' and 'hegemonized' geographic space (Santos 1994); that the emergence of a 'networked region' reflects, *inter alia*, the "thickness of public and private industrial support institutions", and depends on "the receptivity of firms towards innovations" (Todtling 1994:80); that fusion of telecommunications and information technology ('telematics') still have limited impact on development in peripheral regions (Ilbery et al. 1995); and, that different forms of 'territorial mobilisation' tend to surge in defence of local priorities against globalisation (Hadjimichalis 1994).

The actual designation (labelling) of local identity components drew upon the works of Portuguese geographers, anthropologists and socio-economists, such as Ribeiro (1991), Brito (1994), Bandeira (1991), Cavaco (1992) Barreto (2000) and Caetano (2000), renown for their in-depth assessments and typologies of physical and human specificities of Portuguese regions and places, especially in rural areas. In addition, various diagnostic studies and policy-oriented documents from central, regional and local government agencies and NGOs (e.g.: Animar 2001; 1998; MP 1999; MA 1995; DGDR 1997) were consulted in developing a first roster of local identity components.

The testing of this roster in the field<sup>6</sup> resulted in the elimination of identity components considered as too vague or obsolete and in the addition of new ones that either have not been prioritised in the literature or refer to recently emerged identity features. Among such new features, those related to global stimuli to local production and businesses occupy a prominent place.

This matches with theoretical expectations on the subject such as, for example, that "firms now have geographical imaginations that privilege regions and localities as the geographical scales of choice in making decisions about investments rather than the national territories that once dominated their geographical mindset (e.g. Hocking 1997 Elcock 1997, Jones 1997, but see Wright 1998)" (Agnew 2000:105), as well as that the importance of 'local embedding'

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<sup>6</sup> Consultations were carried out in rural areas of Northern, Central and Southern Portugal with the teams of professionals involved in assessments of local and regional development issues and in design and implementation of development programs, projects and initiatives.

(workforce, information-gathering, markets, finance, etc.) and networks are changing, "since a considerable number of SMEs are also engaged in international and global markets and networks and parts of large firms are also linked to the local environment" (Todtling 1994:82-83). The finally obtained roster consisted of seventy-five components that mirror major, traditionally salient and recent identity features of rural Portugal. In the KAP questionnaire, all identity components are clustered in three spheres - the socio-cultural, socio-economic and techno-economic (Box 1).

<b>Box 1. Components of local identity</b>		
Socio-cultural sphere	Socio-economic sphere	Techno-economic sphere
1. Collective memory (old symbols, songs, legends)	1. "Assistencialismo" (spirit of passive dependence on external assistance)	1. Adoption of new communication & information technologies
2. Conservative localism	2. Aged population	2. Air pollution
3. Constructed rural heritage	3. Consumerism (spirit of)	3. Alternative tourism and leisure industry (ecology, culture)
4. Cultural production (exhibits, concerts, theatre)	4. Creation of new employment	4. Big enterprises
5. Degraded cultural landscape	5. Educational attainment	5. External demand for agro-products
6. Environmental conscientiousness	6. Entrepreneurial spirit	6. External investment -international
7. Historic urban nuclei (old towns)	7. Exodus of the youth	7. External investment - national
8. International tourism	8. Incentives to retain the youth	8. Financial institutions (banks, insurance companies)
9. Mass-media production (local newspapers, radio)	9. Insecure employment	9. Forest degradation
10. Modern arts and crafts (souvenirs)	10. Living standard (reasonable high)	10. Market agriculture
11. Multiethnic conviviality	11. Newly enriched class	11. Mass tourism and leisure industry
12. National tourism	12. People's indebtedness	12. Micro-enterprises
13. People's self-esteem	13. People's political participation	13. Modern agricultural technology
14. Positive cultural image	14. Pluriactivity	14. Modern industrial technology
15. Private sponsorship of local culture	15. Pockets of poverty	15. Old industrial technology
16. Public investment in local culture	16. Presence of secondary residences	16. Organic farming
17. Religiousness among the youth	17. Professional qualification	17. Public domestic water supply
18. Traditional arts and crafts	18. Professionals from other regions (national and international)	18. Public sewage system
19. Traditional culinary art	19. Rural-urban inequality	19. SMEs
20. Traditional cultural landscape	20. Social crises and conflicts (drugs, crime, street protests)	20. Soil degradation
21. Traditional events (feasts, fairs)	21. Social inequality	21. Solid waste collection
22. Traditional modes of conviviality	22. Social services for the elderly	22. Subsistence agriculture
23. Traditional public spaces	23. Temporary emigrants	23. Supermarkets
24. Urban lifestyles in villages	24. Traditional solidarity relations	24. Traditional, atomised commerce
25. Xenophobia	25. Unemployment	25. Water pollution

Most identity components were clustered on the basis of their usual belonging to a particular sphere of identity. Some components, such as those related to social and environmental features, are transversally relevant to all sectors of local life and development, and thus make part of more than one sphere of identity. A different, perhaps more detailed clustering of identity components (e.g., making sharper distinctions between environmental, social, economic, and other components) could have been introduced, but that would turn the KAP questionnaire too complex and would only complicate communication with respondents.

The first questionnaire, used as part of the nation-wide pilot KAP survey, addressed professional local development activists (LDAs), mostly senior staff in local and regional

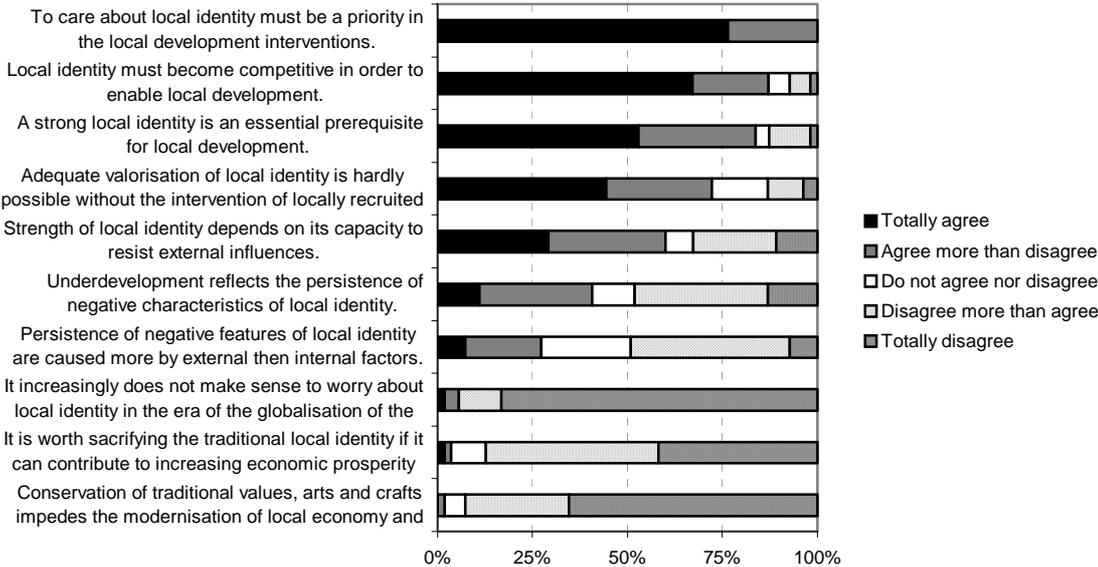
development agencies<sup>7</sup> and consisted of two sections. The first one was intended to bring evidence of the importance LDAs attribute to local identity as a policy issue and to explore their representation of the socio-cultural, socio-economic and techno-economic dimensions of the identity of places and regions in which they operate. In the second section, the attitudes of LDAs towards globalisation in general and, in particular, towards its effects on local identity are explored. Their views on the role of individual and institutional stakeholders in that change are also recorded.

**First records**

On local identity

Asked to express their views on the importance of local identity in development of the area in which they operate, LDAs unanimously supported the idea that "to care about local identity must be a priority in the local development interventions" and a large majority agreed that local identity "must become competitive in order to enable local development" (Chart 1).

Chart 1. Attitudes of LDAs regarding local identity and development issues (% responses)



Likewise, a majority shares the view that "a strong local identity is an essential prerequisite for local development and also favours (though not so explicitly) the idea that "adequate

<sup>7</sup> Around one hundred and fifty local and regional development agencies operate in Portugal under various juridical forms (e.g., associations, co-operatives, foundations and consulting firms) (Animar 1998a). Many have emerged as part of the recent history of Portugal (marked by the overall democratisation of development) and actually became leading agents of socio-economic change in rural areas, especially since Portugal joined the EU in 1986. The use of EU Structural Funds has been largely channelled to support their activity.

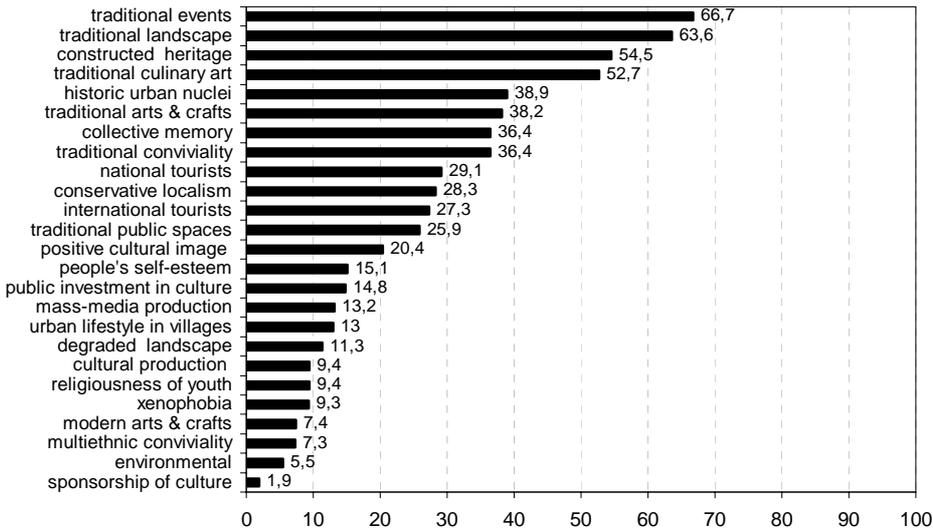
valorisation of local identity is hardly possible without the intervention of locally recruited local development agents.”

Large majority of LDAs disagreed with allegations such as that "it does not make sense to worry about local identity in the era of the globalisation" and that "conservation of traditional values, arts and crafts impedes the modernisation of local economy and society.” A less firm negative response was recorded on the suggestion that “it is worth sacrificing the traditional local identity if that would help increasing the economic prosperity of a local community”.

Finally, the LDAs reacted much less unanimously in supporting or rejecting the suggestions that "the strength of local identity has to do with the capacity to resist external influences". An even greater disagreement was on the idea that “underdevelopment reflects the persistence of negative characteristics of local identity”. The most controversial issue, however, seems to be whether "the persistence of negative characteristics of local identity has to do with internal or external factors", on which approximately equal shares of affirmative, negative and neutral response were obtained.

Requested to portray the area in which they operate by indicating the level of presence of the components of local identity, the majority of LDAs ranked as highest the traditional events, traditional cultural landscape, constructed rural heritage and traditional culinary art (Chart 2).

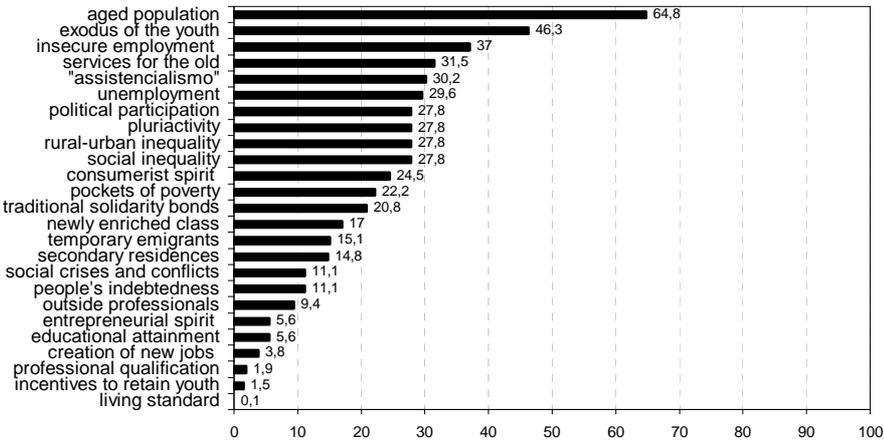
Chart 2. "Strongly present" components of socio-cultural identity (% responses by LDAs)



A sizeable share of medium ranks (20-40% of responses) was attributed to a wide diversity of salient identity components such as traditional modes of conviviality, use of traditional public places, traditional arts and crafts and presence of collective memory and conservative localism, but also to a wide range of newly emerging features such as the presence of national and international tourists, degradation of cultural landscape, penetration of urban lifestyles in villages, public investments in local culture, production of local journals and positive cultural image of the area of LDAs' operations. The lowest importance (less than 10% of responses) was attributed to components such as the religiousness of the youth, xenophobia and multiethnic conviviality, while environmental conscientiousness is still does not make part of the local cultural identity.

Regarding the socio-economic sphere of local identity, most LDAs attributed highest ranks to two most notorious features of contemporary rural Portugal: the aged population and exodus of the youth (Chart 3).

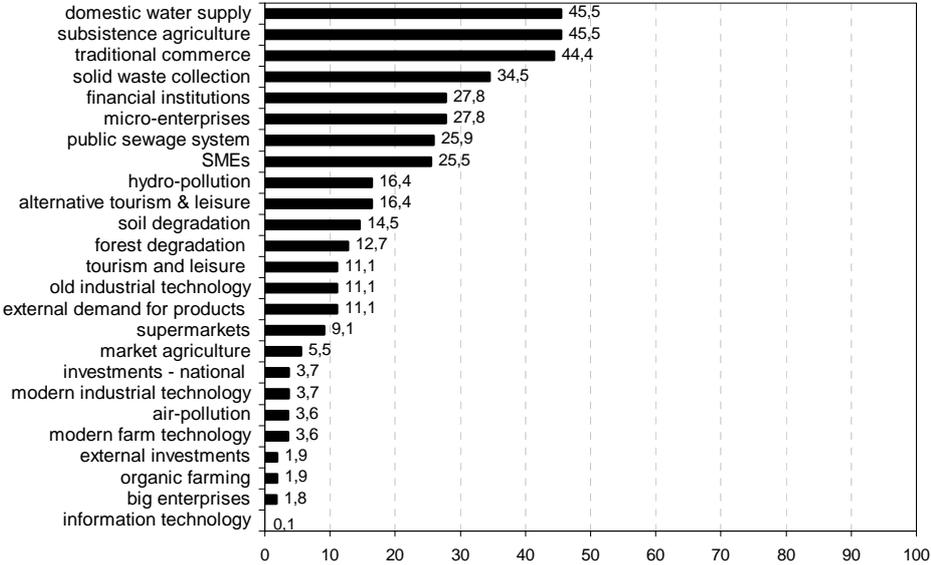
Chart 3. "Strongly present" components of socio-economic identity (% responses by LDAs)



Not surprisingly (Barreto 2000), insecure employment was ranked third, followed by the medium presence (15-30% responses) of a mixture of "well established" features such as, "assistencialismo" (i.e., spirit of passive dependence on external assistance), unemployment, rural-urban gap, traditional solidarity relations, on one side and, on the other, new phenomena such as consumerism, growing social inequalities and pluriactivity. The weakest presence (less than 10% responses) LDAs attributed to several identity feature that are most usually considered as strategically important for social progress, such as educational attainment, entrepreneurial spirit and incentives to retain youth.

No component of the techno-economic dimension of local identity was considered outstandingly present by the majority of LDAs (Chart 4).

Chart 4. "Strongly present" components of techno-economic identity (% responses by LDAs)

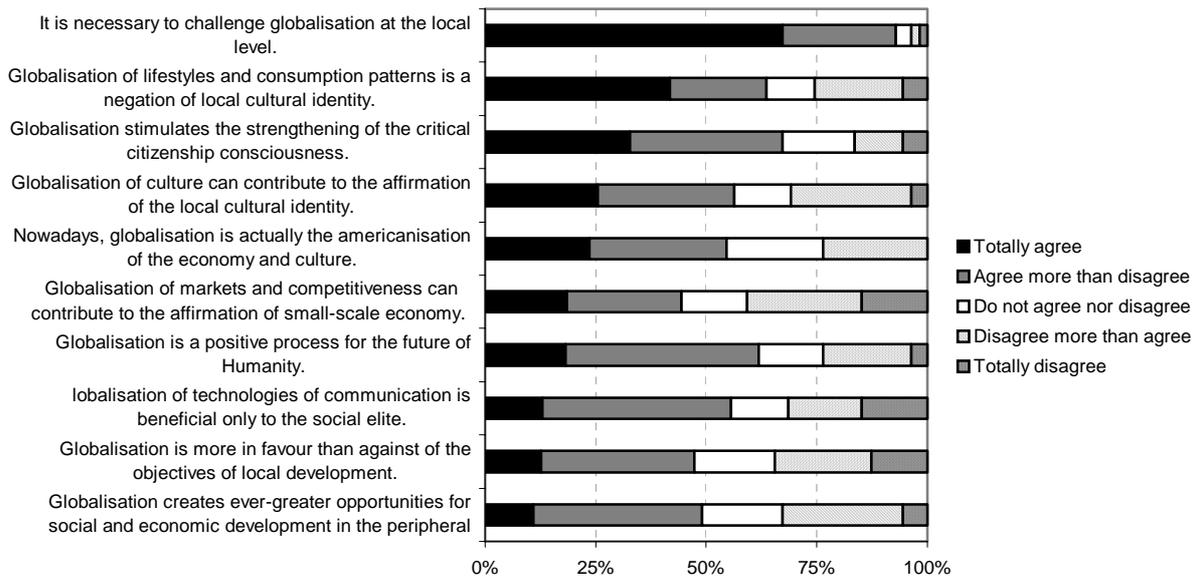


The highest ranks (over 30% responses) belong to identity features that reflect the still prevailing traditional economic structure, i.e., subsistence agriculture and small, atomised commerce, but also some important elements of progress, such as recent investments in domestic water supply and solid waste collection. Medium ranks (10-30% responses) belong to such diverse components as the SMEs and micro- enterprises, alternative tourism and leisure industry, as well as the use old industrial technology and environmental problems such as water pollution, forest and soil degradation. The minimum presence (less than 5% responses) was ascribed to features that are usually regarded as symptoms of progress and innovation in rural areas, such as modernisation of agricultural technology, external demand for local agricultural products, increased external investments (both national and foreign) and organic farming. Finally, the LDAs consider that the adoption of new information/communication technologies is not at all a local identity feature.

On globalisation

The only globalisation-related argument on which the majority of the LDAs expressed their absolute support is "that it is necessary to challenge globalisation at the local level", while on other issues their reactions diverged in all directions (Chart 5).

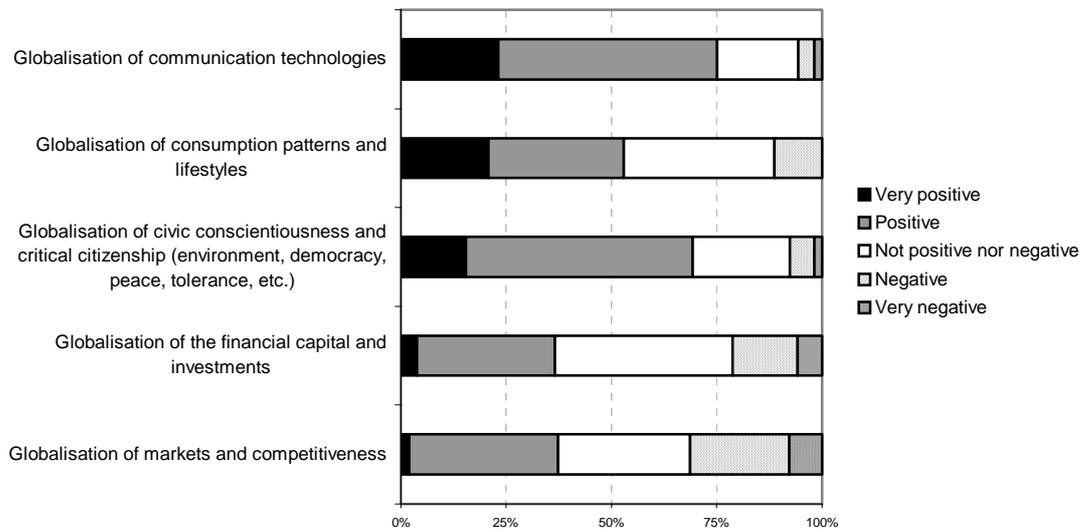
Chart 5. Attitudes of LDAs regarding Globalisation and Development  
(% responses by LDAs)



While extremely opposite attitudes were expressed on the issue of whether globalisation of communication technologies is beneficial only to the elites, the two allegations that provoked greatest divergence and indeed scepticism (neutral answers) among the LDAs are that “globalisation of markets and competitiveness can contribute to the affirmation of small-scale economy” and that “globalisation is more in favour than against the objectives of local development”. Finally, on the issue of whether “globalisation creates ever-greater opportunities for social and economic development in the peripheral regions” a near majority expressed affirmative views, but this issue provoked also important shares of neutral and negative reactions.

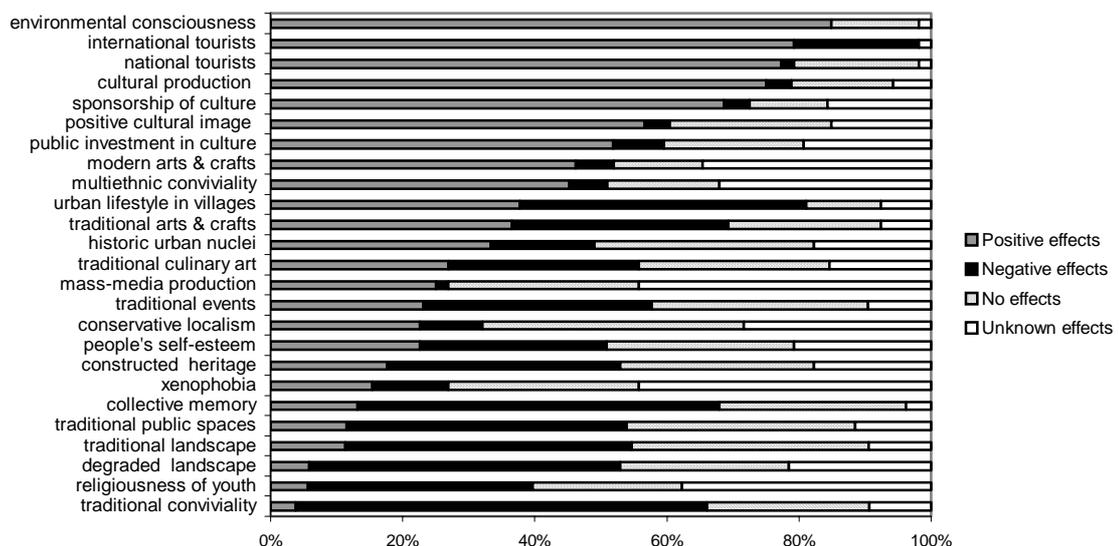
In contrast to the above, the views of LDAs diverge very much regarding effects of globalisation on the geographic area in which they operate (Chart 6). While the majority praises the globalisation of communication technologies and of civic conscientiousness and critical citizenship, there is an important share of neutral views on these issues. On the other side, while no LDA considers local effects of globalisation on consumption patterns and lifestyles as "very negative", there is a great deal of divergence between those who support and those who are uncertain or have "more negative than positive" views towards this phenomenon. Greatest level of uncertainty and indeed division among the LDAs was recorded regarding local effects of globalisation of financial capital and competitiveness.

Chart 6. Attitudes of LDAs regarding effects of globalisation in the area in which they operate (% responses of LDAs)



It seems that, in general terms, more positive than negative effects of globalisation on the socio-cultural sphere of identity have been felt in areas in which LDAs operate, particularly regarding the components such as environmental conscientiousness, cultural production, private sponsorship of local culture, presence of international tourists, external cultural image and public investments in local culture (Chart 7).

Chart 7. Effects of globalisation on socio-cultural components of local identity (% response)

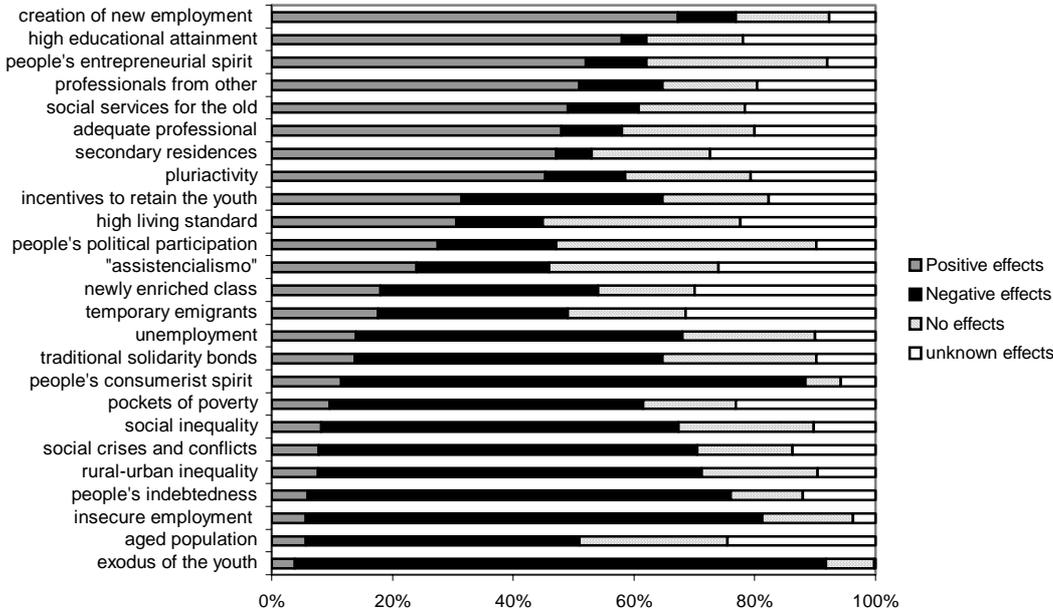


Most LDAs attributed negative effects to only two components, namely traditional modes of conviviality and collective memory. Among other more negatively than positively affected components are cultural landscape, both traditional and degraded, traditional public spaces

and traditional events. Equal shares of LDAs consider penetration of urban lifestyles in villages as positive and negative effect of globalisation.

Regarding the socio-economic sphere of identity, the LDAs indicated a much smaller number of positively than negatively affected components (Chart 8). The majority of LDAs reported positive effects only on the creation of new employment opportunities, higher educational attainment, people's entrepreneurial spirit and presence of professionals from other regions. The overwhelming majority attributed negative effects to a wide diversity of traditional and recently emerged components such as the exodus of the youth, consumerist spirit, insecure employment, rural-urban inequality, peoples' indebtedness, social crises and conflicts, social inequality, unemployment, pockets of poverty and traditional solidarity relations.

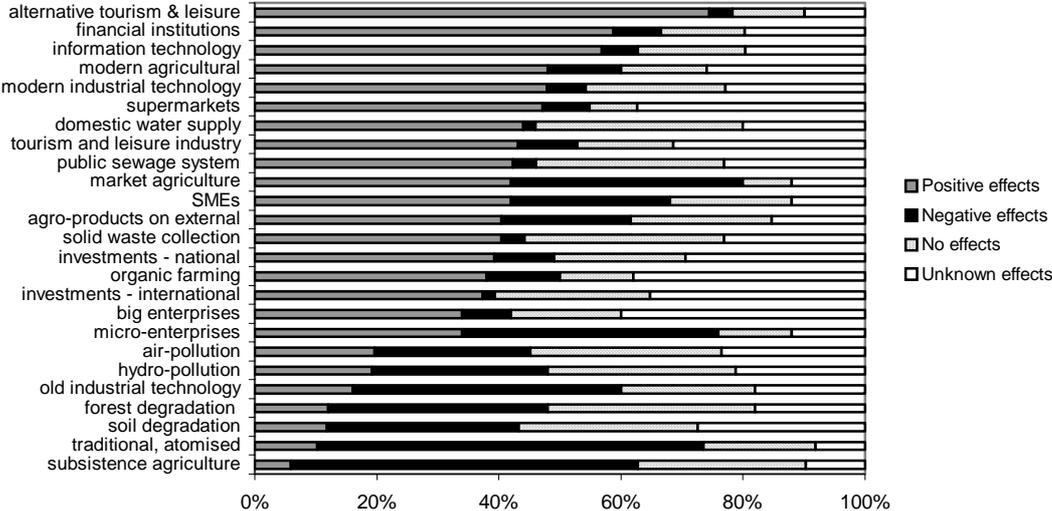
Chart 8. Effects of globalisation on socio-economic components of local identity (% response of LDAs)



Finally, the LDAs attributed more positive, neutral and unknown, than negative effects of globalisation to identity components in the techno-economic sphere (Chart 9). Most of them associated positive effects to alternative tourism and leisure industry, the role of financial institutions, adoption of communication and information technologies, as well as to technological modernisation of industry and agriculture. Most negatively affected seem to be traditional commerce, micro-enterprises, old industrial production and agriculture, both subsistence and commercial. The unknown effects are attributed mostly to recently emerging

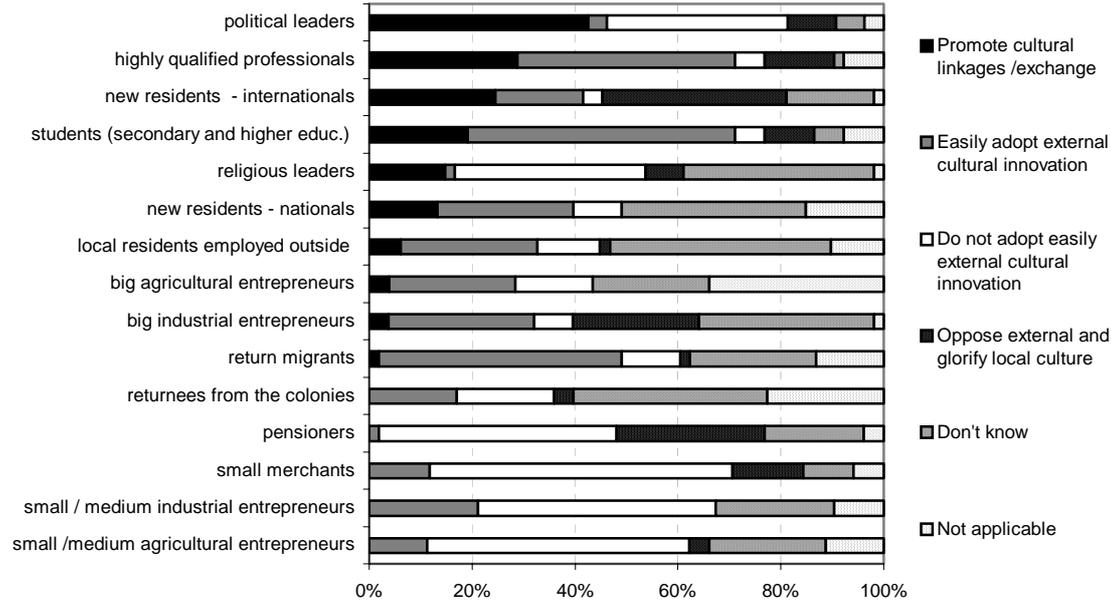
features, bringing new dynamics to local economy, such as the big enterprises, supermarkets, organic farming and tourism and leisure industry

Chart 9. Effects of globalisation on techno-economic components of local identity (% response by LDAs)



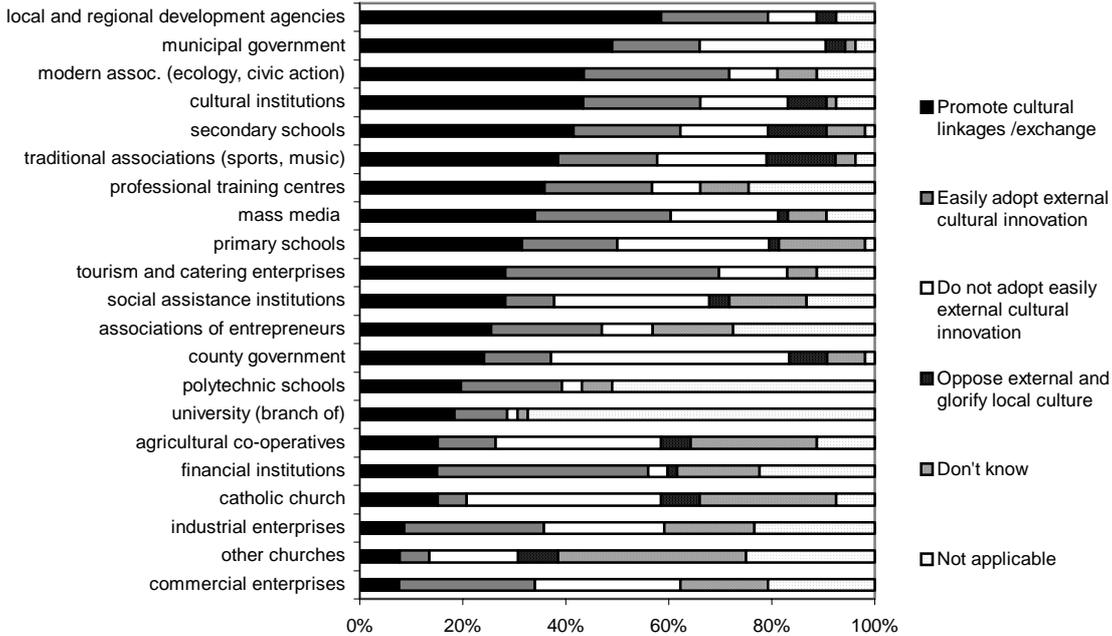
When requested in the KAP questionnaire to qualify the role of different local individuals as local development stakeholders in relation to the socio-cultural sphere of identity, LDAs pointed to local political leaders as the only outstanding “promoters of cultural linkages and exchange” with the outside world (Chart 10).

Chart 10. Attitudes of LDAs on the role of individual stakeholders in relation to the socio-cultural sphere of local identity (% valid responses by LDAs)



Furthermore, most of the LDAs considered students, return migrants and highly skilled professionals as local stakeholders who "easily adopt external cultural innovation", while small merchants, small and medium farmers, small and medium industrial entrepreneurs and retirees are the most notable among those who "do not adopt easily external cultural innovation". Among those who "oppose external and glorify local culture", the most frequently highlighted were the new residents from other countries. Among the institutional stakeholders (Chart 11), most LDAs consider that true "promoters of cultural exchange" are only local and regional development agencies, local governments, modern civic associations, cultural institutions and secondary schools. While just the Catholic Church and social assistance institutions "do not adopt cultural innovation easily", there are no great differences among other institutions in respect to the preservation of the cultural sphere of local identity.

Chart 11. Attitudes of LDAs on the role of institutional stakeholders in relation to the socio-cultural sphere of local identity (% valid responses)



**Conclusions**

This research revealed a possible way out from conceptual-methodological constraints to a deeper understanding of global effects on local identity. By extensively disaggregating the concept of local identity into discernible and verifiable components, it was possible to record a diversified evidence of LDAs' representations of global effects on local identity. Main findings, lessons learned and suggestions for future research are given below.

The LDAs were unanimous in supporting the common pro-identity rhetoric, but disagreed on specific, tangible and subtle topics and dilemmas, such as, for example, whether local factors, and not only global, cause and perpetrate negative identity features and underdevelopment, and whether to accept the trade-offs between modernisation and tradition, at the expense of the latter, in the name of social and economic progress. Most of the LDAs were very critical towards their local communities, pointing to the strong presence of identity features such as ‘assistencialismo’, low self-esteem, local conservatism, lack of entrepreneurship and low educational attainment, i.e., symptoms of deep rooted socio-economic passivity and stagnation. It is, therefore, not surprising that the LDAs expressed greatest mutual disagreement, and indeed scepticism about the prospects for (re)affirmation of local identities as a means of increasing competitiveness of local culture and economy.

It seems that ‘glocalization’ has not yet significantly contributed to local identities. According to the LDAs, the traditional local ‘fixes’ and ‘horizontalities’, related to cultural values, lifestyles, social institutions and economic structure, still dominate over recently emerging identity components synonymous to global ‘fluxes’ and ‘verticalities’ (Santos, 1994), such as consumerism, international and alternative tourism and leisure industry, rurbanization, integration of external professionals and secondary residents. Likewise, very weak presence of components such as commercial agriculture, external investments, modern industrial technology and big firms show that ‘networked regions’ and local ‘embeddedness’ of global economic agents (Agnew 2000; Todtling 1994) are still not a reality. More, the LDAs’ assertion that telematics is not yet notable as an identity component of rural Portugal corroborates similar findings from other peripheral countries and regions (Ilbery et al. 1995).

All of the most strongly present identity components related to cultural traditions, human resources and structure of economy seem to have been more negatively than positively affected by globalisation. In fact, LDAs point to imminent loss of certain features that are commonly considered as ‘uniquely Portuguese’, thus representing potentially competitive local development assets (Albino 1997; Benko 2000), such as the traditional cultural landscape, traditional events and habits and collective memory. On the other, more reassuring side, some moderately present local identity components - such as commercial agriculture and external demand for local products, international tourism, local cultural production and, potentially linked to all those, creation of new employment opportunities - seem to be much more positively than negatively associated with impacts of globalisation. It is also encouraging that currently very weakly present but desirable, dynamic, innovative and/or

potentially competitive identity components - such as environmental conscientiousness, people's self-esteem and entrepreneurial spirit, incentives to retain the youth, modernisation of agricultural technology, organic farming and external investments, as well as adoption of telematics - also seem to be much more positively than negatively associated with globalisation.

Findings from this research, have brought some more light to a wide scope of local identity issues as reported by a specific local development stakeholder, the LDAs. Future studies should proceed in two directions, as parallel research-lines: first, the present model should be further elaborated and applied in KAP surveys addressing a wide variety of other development stakeholders (Groote et al. 2000); second, an adequate methodological framework should be developed for confronting such records of perceived, imagined or 'claimed identities ' (Haartsen et al. 2000) with realities in all spheres of life.

An important limitation of the present model is the lack of reference to time-frame(s) in the records of stakeholders' representations of changing identities. Furthermore, the accounts of 'globalisation effects' need to be desaggregated, so as to distinguish, for example, the effects of world-wide processes from concrete US- or EU-driven dynamics. Another key problem to be tackled in KAP surveys is the setting up of benchmarks for distinguishing 'negative' from 'positive', 'desirable' from 'unwanted', or 'strong' from 'weak' components. In this context, the most challenging would be to set criteria for distinguishing the levels of 'global competitiveness' of identity components. The adequacy of such improvements of the present model will determine the success of the other second line of research, aimed at confronting the imagined with real local identities (Agnew 1999). Multivariate analyses of stakeholders' representations should be carried out in relation to their personal and professional profiles and experience, the official information on regional and local geographic and socio-economic contexts in which they operate, as well as against the global development tendencies and the concrete policy frameworks and instruments that affect them as beneficiaries, or not.

Confronting the perceived identities with geographical and developmental reality should enable the categorisation of identity features as 'development resources', the development of typologies of stakeholders in terms of their integration in the local and global economy and culture, as well as the assessment of their roles as producers and consumers of territorial identities. In this way, grounds would be laid for a more efficient, that is, explicit and operationally viable, integration of the care for local identity in development policies.

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