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"May the Smoke Keep Coming Out the Fireplace": Moral Connections between Rural Tourism and Socio-Ecological Resilience in the EUME Region, Galicia

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Abstract: For several decades, tourism has been considered an important instrument for the sustainable development of rural areas. However, a great deal of scholarship has cast a doubt on the actual economic and ecological impacts of many of these initiatives. Acknowledging these critiques, we argue in this paper that a more accurate examination of the implication of rural development projects based on tourism should not merely look at the number of overnight stays or the income generated, but also at the multiple, subtle and complex implications of tourism for socio-ecological resilience. In order to do this, we argue, it is crucial to pay attention to the moral values underpinning tourism practices. Through an ethnographic analysis of the material, symbolic and experiential transformations brought about by a number of tourism initiatives in a rural region in Galicia, our goal is to discuss the complex connections between the promotion of this new activity, the diversification of the local economy, and the social reproduction of local communities and their specific forms of human-environment engagements.

1. Introduction

Since the 1980s, tourism has been considered strategic to the sustainable development of rural areas [1–4]. It stimulates job creation, farm diversification, the promotion of local food and drinks, the stewardship of natural and cultural resource, and community cohesion. In Europe, good examples of this are the rural tourism initiatives that emerged in the 1990s and the 2000s, with the support of different LEADER programs [5]. They aimed to mitigate the depopulation of rural regions that were socially and economically marginalized in the process of agrarian modernization during the twentieth century by providing subsidies and incentives for the diversification of their local economies and the preservation of environmental values [6]. However, many have argued over the controversies surrounding these initiatives, as tourism in rural areas also creates problems such as rising housing prices and environmental impacts [5,7–9]. In many cases, it has also failed to become an activity significant enough to ameliorate the socioeconomic problems of rural communities. Inadequate regulation and tax systems, a lack of infrastructure, faulty marketing strategies and strong competition with coastal destinations are usually identified as culprits. At a more subjective level, the lack of involvement among local communities is also seen as another crucial barrier [3]. What is more, many criticize that rural tourism is barely different from any other kind of tourism [8]: it might just help to expand capitalism [7,10], creating important impacts that are contradict sustainability goals.

As growing fields of enquiry that reflect on socioeconomic forces and power relations in the production of tourism commodities, both political economy and political ecology studies have been particularly adamant about the social and environmental impacts of tourism and the need for alternatives [11,12]. However, these studies pay insufficient attention to how tourism initiatives and practices are influenced by moral norms [13]. As Mostafanezhad and Hannam [14] argue, just as the economy is also morality, not only power and interests [15], so is tourism. This paper delves into the impacts (both positive and negative) of tourism in rural communities and ecosystems through a theoretical approach that focuses on moral values [13,14]. This kind of examination involves analyzing impacts through the study of specific personal and collective strategies in tourism, the values attached to different touristic practices vis-à-vis human–environment interactions, and the variegated "uses" of tourism. Such an analysis will serve to outline the contours of what we could call a "moral ecology" of tourism.

Since the 1990s, critical studies in tourism have not only highlighted the ills of tourism worldwide, but also encouraged new, more ethical forms of tourism, acknowledging the varieties and heterogeneity within the tourist sector. The debates around community-based tourism (CBT) are one example. CBT provides an alternative way of organizing tourism following certain principles, such as local ownership of natural and cultural resources, the local participation and local control of tourism business, and tourism as a complement to local economies [16]. Beyond the unique forms of organization and governance within CBT, other important features are the alternative "senses" and "meanings" of tourism. CBT hinges on a different set of moral values, such as the promotion of communal interests and shared access to benefits, instead of mere individual profit [17].

This kind of attention to morality in tourism is rather recent [14], yet morality has been central to the critical analysis of the tourist business for decades. Either seen positively (as a passport to development for countries in the Global South or a force promoting world peace) or negatively (as a new form of colonialism, capitalist expansion, or a frivolous consumerist experience), from a morality perspective, tourism is never neutral: it always has moral implications. The kind of analysis that we intend to carry out in this paper builds on the field of moral economy, understood as the study of the moral values and cultural norms embedded in all economic practices [15,18]. This field rejects dichotomist conceptions that separate economic practice from morality. As Palomera and Vetta suggest: "Against binary views of the market as a boundless realm penetrating previously untainted moral spheres, […] social reproduction is characterized by an entanglement of values" [19] (p. 413). Therefore, there is not a capitalist form of tourism versus a moral form of tourism, just the contrary: moral values are present in every type of tourism [20].

Furthermore, the debates around alternative and more ethical ways of organizing tourism are moving from the analysis of benefits to the local communities and ecosystems to the broader idea of socio-ecological resilience, understood as the capacity of a socio-ecosystem that is subjected to some kind of stress or profound change to regenerate itself in a creative way without altering its form and functions significantly [21]. As Ruiz-Ballesteros [22] argues, in order to understand the impacts of tourism practices we need to approach local communities in its inextricable connection with the surrounding environment. Such an approach hinges on phenomenological anthropological analysis of human–environment interactions [23], where knowledges and practices do not precede people's engagement with the environment but emerge in every-day interactions [24]. As a result, the notion of socio-ecosystem does not separate the social and environmental impacts of tourism. Instead, considering the inextricable entanglement of human, non-human and more-than-human entities, it provides a more complex way of studying the intersections between forms of governance, cultural and social structures, and human–environment relations among local communities [25].

Alongside the notion of the socio-ecosystem, the idea of resilience also offers a more suitable framework to assess the impacts of tourism than other related notions, such as sustainability. Rather than just a particular state of being, resilience is a heuristic tool that helps us evaluate the success of tourism initiatives from within the complex network of meanings, needs and values of the local community [21].

Resilience focuses on community agency in the attempt to answer questions such as: "How do some members of local communities feel about running a tourism business?"; "How and why do they do it?"; "What does it mean for the rest of the community not directly employed in tourism?"; "How does tourism fit within existing socio-histories?"; and "How does it merge with, or alter their engagement with the surrounding environment?". The notion of sustainability alone is not enough to answer these questions. As Lew et al. [26] argue, though distinct conceptual paradigms, together these two notions (sustainability and resilience) provide us with a more suitable perspective to studying what the community wants to conserve and how they want to do it (sustainability), and what they want to change and how they want to do it (resilience). In short, the novelty of the socio-ecological resilience approach is that it does not approach tourism only as an economic business, but also as a complex practice that develops in the context of meaningful community–environmental entanglements [22].

An analysis of the contributions of tourism to socio-ecological resilience must consider that these contributions are not necessarily straightforward, but usually subtle, complex and dynamic. They might also vary according to local circumstances. As such, the study of socio-ecological resilience in tourism requires a careful, in-depth and case-by-case examination using a holistic lens. This approach contrasts with the strong tendency to apply rather general, abstract and reductionist frames that merely focus on the number of overnight stays, jobs or income generated, which is still rather common both in the reporting guidelines of programs like LEADER [27], and in the academic literature in general [12,28]. It also contrasts with analyses of problems based on a lack of infrastructure or inadequate legislation, which tend to ignore key political economy/ecology issues, such as the distribution of benefits and the interactions with other economic activities. Moreover, they also oversee the moral aspect of tourism, such as the possible contribution to the social reproduction of local communities [13].

In this paper we explore the intersections between rural tourism, socio-ecological resilience and moral values. We believe such an analysis can help us understand the interaction between local communities and tourism, their engagement (or lack thereof), and the resilience not only of the socio-ecosystem but also of the very tourism initiatives themselves. We illustrate this using a case study in the Eume region in Galicia (northwest Spain), where several old farmsteads were turned into rural hotels in the last two decades in order to diversify and complement the predominantly farming economy with the support of EU rural development programs (mostly LEADER). Galicia is a suitable case to study the moral values behind the contribution of rural tourism to socio-ecological resilience because in recent decades important tensions have emerged due to the accelerated closure of small family farms, hitherto the identifying feature of rural Galicia [29], and de-population and the subsequent expansion of eucalyptus plantations in abandoned farming lands, which is bringing about severe ecological and landscape impacts [30].

As we will explain in what follows, the development of tourism in the Eume region—the creation of a network of rural hotels, the public use infrastructure such as paths and visitor centers, among others, in a territory hitherto merely agrarian—was not only embraced by many local actors because of its economic potential, but also as a community "binding" tool and a way of helping people remain in a rural area threatened by depopulation. The main driver of this threat was and still is the decline of small family farms. In fact, these farms, specializing in dairy production, are privileged places to observe the tensions and coexistence (marked by extremely uneven power relations) of two different moral obligation and value regimes (one framed within a market economy, the other within the sphere of local social reproduction), as evidenced in their demands in recent years for a just price (prezo xusto) for the milk they produce [29].

Thus, through the ethnographic analysis of the development of tourism in the Eume region, the creation of different tourism initiatives and their subsequent challenges, we will be engaging with three crucial phenomena: the decline of dairy family farms, depopulation and the expansion of the forestry industry. We will analyze how the development of tourism in the Eume region is framed within these different phenomena (to which we must add the designation of a protected natural area, the Fragas do Eume Natural Park), while examining the temporalities, materialities, rhythms and power

relations of local social life. This will permit us to show how the development of tourism involves a number of environmental and social elements that are given touristic values through a process of selection, dimensioning and redefinition that not only provides them with new meanings, but also makes them accessible as a new product to tourists. This process is not simple. For example, it involves transforming and refurbishing old farming buildings as well as learning and implementing new types of work and skills, which have a direct impact on social dynamics within the local community.

Our analysis will allow us to challenge and develop critical political economy and political ecology studies of tourism, which focus on the relationship between tourism, communities, politics and the environment. In particular, how tourism can have implications for local people's natural resource management and land use practices. As such, it speaks directly to the three core concerns: communities and power, conservation and control, and development and conflict [11,12]. It is precisely at the intersection between tourism, community and socio-ecological resilience that we can investigate moral values of tourism, taking it not as a simple economic activity but as a meaningful practice, in the sense of De Certeau [31]. From this perspective, tourism can be developed in different ways and for different purposes. We consider it necessary to study not only the economic performance of this activity (gross revenues, number of beds created, number of overnight stays) but also how this new activity is socially legitimized, how it is activated, defended and negotiated, with the ultimate objective of contributing to the reproduction of the community in its interaction with the surrounding environment. Building on Saxena et al. [32], this is what we could call a "moral ecology" of tourism.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Case Study: The Eume Region

The Eume region extends over 540 km^2 in the northeastern area of the province of A Coruña, flanking the basin of the Eume river (see Figure 1). It is formed by five municipalities (A Capela, As Pontes de García Rodríguez, Monfero, Cabanas and Pontedeume). Among these municipalities, we focus specifically on the largest one, Monfero (172.38 km^2): an eminently rural territory whose population mainly lives off milk production in small family farms. At the time of this study, it had a population of 1990 people living in small hamlets and farmsteads (source: the Galician Institute of Statistics (IGE); all demographic data in this paper comes from this source). The forestry sector, with fast-growing species such as eucalyptus, is also becoming important to the local economy. These characteristics distinguish it from other municipalities in the region, especially As Pontes, historically linked to coal mining and energy production, and the coastal towns of Pontedeume and Cabanas, where the service sector is dominant. Two large cities are less than 40 kms away: Ferrol (68,300 inhabitants), with its port and historic naval industry, and the capital city of A Coruña (244,000 inhabitants), mostly dedicated to the service sector.

The proximity to these cities and industrial areas marked the socioeconomic and socio-ecological history of Monfero. The strong depopulation experienced since the 1960s–1970s went hand by hand with the industrial and urban development of Ferrol, Coruña and elsewhere around the coast. The migration of the younger segments of the local community to urban and industrial areas, attracted by the availability of wage labor, and the ageing population that remained in the countryside led to a gradual process of socio-ecological transformation.
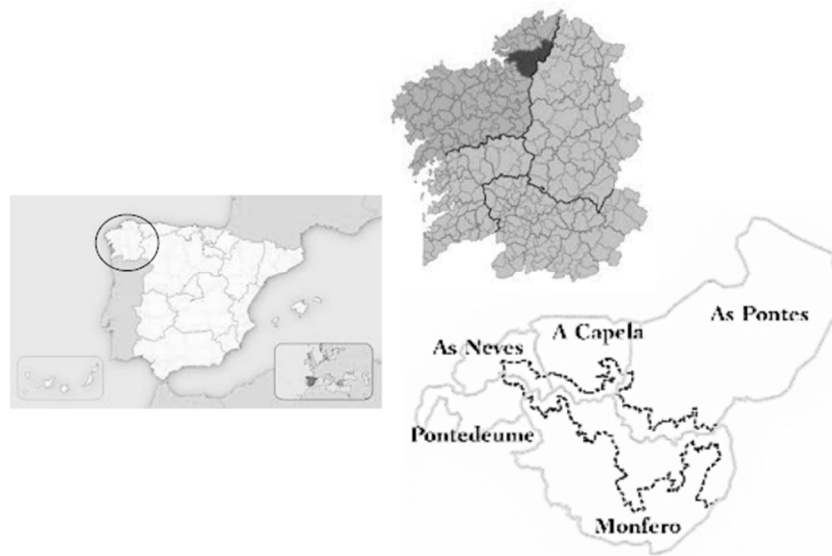
Figure 1. The Eume Region.

Before the specialization in milk production began to occur on local farms (and throughout Galicia) during the latter period of Franco's dictatorship (1960s–1970s), the landscape was dominated by a mosaic of a wide variety of crops: corn, wheat, rye, potatoes, turnips, combined with some meadows and large expanses of scrublands, which had important multifunctional uses [20]. With the milk specialization, many of these functions were abandoned and many lands were transformed into grass fields and meadows to feed the increasing number of cattle. At that same time, the dictatorship also introduced and encouraged forestry plantations using pines and eucalyptus in the attempt to promote a new forestry industry, a promotion that both the state and regional governments continued with the return of democracy in the late 1970s, as the 1992 Galicia forestry plan shows [29] (p. 64, 185). As a result, eucalyptus plantations and grassland meadows for cattle pasture began to dominate Monfero's landscape. Since the 1990s, these plantations have been gaining further terrain as many farms were progressively abandoned due to the retirement or death of Monfero's aging population and the extra burden for small family farms brought about by the volatility of milk prices and other issues related with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the global process of industrialization of food production (see Figures 2–5).
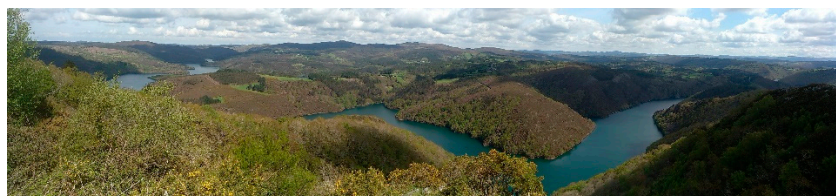

Figure 2. Farms and meadows in Monfero. Author: Jose A. Cortes-Vazquez.
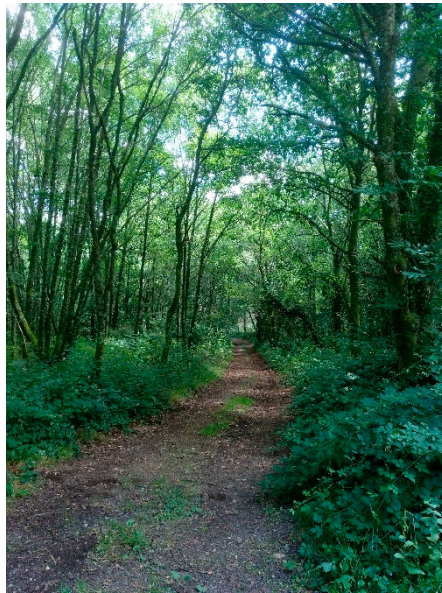
Figure 3. Native woodlands. Author: Jose A. Cortes-Vazquez.

Figure 4. Land affected by eucalyptus plantations. Author: Jose A. Cortes-Vazquez.

Figure 5. Native woodlands flanking the Eume river. Author: Jose A. Cortes-Vazquez.

Although not as significant, the tourism sector has also gained importance. At the end of the 1990s, the regional government designated the Fragas do Eume Natural Park, a protected area of 9000 ha to preserve one of the last Atlantic deciduous forests with relict vegetation of laurel woods in the Iberian Peninsula: the fraga, which mostly covers the lands around the Eume river, banned new forestry plantations in forested areas while imposing controls on non-forested areas (shrublands, meadows, existing plantations) to prevent clearances and plantations from expanding into native woodlands.

These prohibitions, which mostly affect privately owned lands, triggered important conflicts with landowners. Yet, it was also an incentive to the development of tourism in Monfero, as the park became one of the area's main attractions. The influx of LEADER funds, the constitution of a Local Action Group (Euroeume), and the conversion into a multifunctional rural area promoted by the CAP in the late 1990s were also decisive. In fact, within the Eume region, Monfero was the municipality that received the largest funds from the different LEADER programs. In a first phase, these funds financed 40% and even 50% of the construction of various rural hotels, today the main private activity oriented to tourism in the area (this percentage decreased in subsequent LEADER programs). Nowadays, there are eight rural hotels as well as other companies that provide tourist-related services such as restaurants, guided routes and kayaking.

2.2. Methodology

Our study focuses on the rural hotels that currently operate in Monfero. There are 55 different types of tourist accommodation facility recognized by the existing legislation in Galicia (Law 7/2011, 27 October of the Regional Government of Galicia), which include a wide variety of facilities for the kind of rural tourism analyzed in this paper. For the sake of brevity, and because it goes beyond the scope of the paper to differentiate between them, we will refer to all of them with the term "rural hotels". We contacted the eight hotels that exist in the municipality (see Table 1), although only five of them agreed to participate in this study. We used an ethnographic approach (4 months of continuous fieldwork between 2018 and 2019) mainly based on semi-structured interviews (eight interviews, approximately 90 min each), direct and participant observation, and coincidental conversations to learn about the history of each hotel; their offer, types and number of customers; their customers' expectations and interests; their owners' and managers' business plans; and their relations with other local stakeholders, businesses and the local community. All the informants were women. They were both past and present owners and managers of rural hotels. For all of them, starting work in the hotels meant a new experience, with apparently little relation to what they had done before: civil servant, sales administrator, a student preparing for the exams to become a school teacher, a graduate in sociology, a Latin teacher, a housewife and a bank clerk. Seven of these women have moved to Monfero to run the hotels and could be considered neo-rurals or amenity migrants [33,34]. Only three of them have past or present family ties with the area. Only the three hotels that did not take part of our research were run by men. One of these non-participant hotels has already closed and stopped its activity, and the owners of the other two do not live in the area (one of them lives in a city dozens of kilometers away and comes to the house only to open it to customers; the other lives several thousand kilometers away, and he manages reservations through the Internet while a local neighbor is paid to be in charge of cleaning and receiving customers).

Participant observation was carried out in several of these hotels. During most of the fieldwork, we resided in one of the hotels in order to familiarize with the inner dynamics of this kind of business, the interaction between owners, managers and customers; and the day-to-day problems and the relation with other local agents. Interviews with managers were completed with representatives of the local government and the Local Action Group, landowners and park administration (five interviews). This tourism-specific ethnography was the continuation of another larger ethnographic research project about economic dynamics in the farming sector of the area which was developed between 2014 and 2016 (approximately 60 interviews with farmers and other agents of the farming sector) [29]. These other interviews and fieldwork provide background information about the area. For this paper, we are mostly interested in showing the views, experiences and perspectives of those running rural hotels.

Table 1. Characteristics of the rural hotels in Monfero.

Hotel Code	Number of Rooms	Origin of the Owner	Local Resident	Managed by Owner	Ownership	Participated in Project	Active
1	6 double rooms, ensuite	Local	Yes	Yes	Inherited	Yes	Yes
2	4 apartments, ensuite, with 1 or 2 double rooms each	Newcomer	Temporary	No	Bought	Yes	Yes
3	5 double rooms, ensuite	Local (returned)	Temporary	Yes	Inherited	Yes	Yes
4	9 double rooms, ensuite	Local (returned)	Temporary	Yes	Inherited	Yes	Yes
5	6 double rooms, ensuite	Newcomer	Yes	No	Bought	Yes	Yes
6	4 double rooms, ensuite	Local (not returned)	No	Yes	Inherited	No	Yes
7	5 different houses (2 × 4 bed, 2 × 3 beds, 1 bed)	Local (not returned)	No	No	Unknown	No	Yes
8	4 double rooms, ensuite	Local	Yes	Yes	Inherited	No	No

3. Results

Three different ethnographic vignettes will help us briefly introduce the social context and background that has framed the development of tourism in Monfero over the last two decades, before addressing the details of each tourism business. The first vignette takes place in a bar one afternoon in the spring of 2018. We had stopped for a drink before going back home. The owner, who we knew already, came out of the kitchen to meet us. The bar was empty—though the afternoon, which was the first with warm temperatures and clear skies after two very rainy months, was perfect for sitting on the bar terrace. With no customers to attend to, she joined us. She lamented that not many people came to the bar anymore, sometimes not even men after work as was the local custom. "There are fewer and fewer young people", she explained, "long ago, for example, we used to spend weeks picking up wood to make a bonfire bigger than the neighbors' for the festival of San Xoán (Saint John's day, the summer solstice, on 24 June). Everything was about who could build the biggest bonfire. That was hilarious! We would collect huge piles of wood. But today none of that is done anymore, there are no young people left here and the remaining population is too old and prefer to stay at home."

The second ethnographic vignette takes place in the kitchen of a small family farm. The afternoon was grey, as much as the atmosphere inside the house. They had just decided to sell the cows and close the farm. Milk prices had barely increased since the big fall four years before and the mood and chances of running a small farm were gradually fading. The question lingering over was: "What are we going to live on now?" After dinner, and to scare away the bad mood for a while, we talked fun about an English couple living in the area who could frequently be seen in the bars. It was the only time they had met them, as the couple had neither learned the language nor integrated much into the local community. As far as they knew, none of them had a job, not even in the tourist sector, which our informants saw as unusual because most rural hotels were actually run by newcomers. One woman complained: "It is a pity; the locals are the ones who should benefit from tourism and run the rural hotels. If so, there would be more life here".

The third and final vignette has to do with a celebration. It was the eighteenth anniversary of one of the rural hotels. The current manager commemorated the date by posting a photo in which she appeared with her parents and the rest of her siblings on the opening day on a social network. In one corner, an elderly lady was sitting on a chair. She was the grandmother, who had lived in the house nearly all her life until they moved to a new one built with more modern materials in the 1980s. Since then, it became "the old house" (a casa vella). A decade later they decided to restore it and turn it into a rural hotel. The grandmother would die shortly after the inauguration, something that the manager remembered with great emotion. She had left them "coa tranquilidade de saber que a

cheminea da casa seguiría fumeando" (with the satisfaction of knowing that the smoke would keep coming out the fireplace).

These three ethnographic moments reveal two fundamental issues about the social context of Monfero that need to be considered when delving into the tourist practices developed in the last two decades and how they are embedded in particular moral values. The first issue is related to the lack of job opportunities, depopulation, precariousness and economic and social vulnerability that has been dominant for the last few decades. As explained in [29], the 1990s were marked by the entry into the European Union and the implementation of the CAP, which brought fundamental changes that directly affected dairy farms and deepened specialization in dairy production. These changes pushed these farms either to grow or abandon production, which had a particular impact on small farms as many of them have closed down since then. Milk quotas were also introduced in that decade, which created a significant economic indebtedness for many farms all over Galicia. This happened because the production declared at Galician farms used to be lower than the actual production, which is the reason why they needed to acquire a higher milk quota to cope with the sector's trend of production intensification. The entry into the European Union also implied a rupture with the kind of state protectionism that existed until then in food production—based on a system of guarantees that ensured the sale and minimum profitability to the producer—which now had to open up quickly to international competition within the EU [29] (p.78). Finally, in this period there were also intense sanitation campaigns that, in some farms, involved the complete elimination of their livestock herds (which were restored only in some cases).

The second crucial issue that we need to consider is the inseparable connection between the farms, the houses and the community. In Monfero, as well as in many other rural areas in Galicia, farms and houses merge into just one entity [35]. The houses are not only the cornerstone of the local economy—most of them are at the same time a space of residence (reproduction) and work (production)—but also the symbolic substrate on which the local community is built. We are talking about a scattered population where the house "to which one belongs" is their key marker of identity. The house, therefore, is a place of connections, interests and multiple practices, a crucial node for community and human–environment relations, materially and symbolically [36]. Yet, the house cannot be understood as an objective reality, but as a "condition of being". It is the living house which has some value: the house that represents the possibility of reproduction of the community and the local socio-ecosystem. As the third of the previous vignettes nicely illustrate, this "condition of being" is represented in the idea of a smoking chimney and a burning fireplace.

Considering the central role of the house in the local socio-ecosystem, we set out now to describe the tourism practices associated with the rural hotels that appeared in the area over the last two decades, in order to understand how the development of tourism in Monfero engaged with the local community's quest for socio-ecological resilience. As we will see in the following subsections, this development not only entails the restoration of the old farmhouses and the plots of land that surround them, but also the adapting and changing habits of the people who live and/or work in them. The analysis of the experiences of the different hotels will allow us to reflect on each of these factors. We will see that there are divergent positions and experiences.

3.1. The Material Transformations of Farmhouses

The transformation of old farmhouses into rural hotels experienced over the last two decades required significant economic investment. In this sense, the eight houses studied have several aspects in common. Firstly, they are "big houses" (casa grande), meaning farmsteads that in the past enjoyed some prosperity, and are thus wealthier than the average in the area. This characteristic gives them two advantages in becoming hotels. On the one hand, because of their larger-than-average size, the buildings are more suitable to accommodate a larger number of visitors (5–7 rooms), unlike the majority of other smaller houses which would require accessory, modern constructions. On the other hand, because they were wealthier houses, they also have higher aesthetic values than the humbler

houses. These include, among others: large barns that can be used for meetings, meals or as bedrooms; large living rooms which were former stables; as well as balconies, fountains and large open spaces for recreational activities, such as sun bathing, children games and relaxing.

The advantages of large houses generate, however, a problem: the initial investment to buy one is rather high. This material requirement has impeded many members of the local community from having access to this business, although there are other tourism-related jobs available for them (cleaning, maintenance, catering). Only those that are lucky enough to have inherited a house from an older relative did not encounter such problem. But that was only part of the costs: substantial investments were also needed to restore the houses and reconvert them into hotels. The availability of EU funding coming from the LEADER program, which was managed by the Euroeume Local Action Group, alleviated this burden. The economic amount received varies from one house to another, as well as the percentage of the total investment that was covered.

As mentioned above, farmhouses used to fulfill a triple function: production, reproduction and symbolic-community. Parts of these functions were reflected in its own traditional structure: an all-enclosed building with cow stables next to the kitchen and under the bedrooms. This structure changed as livestock were taken out of houses during the specialization in milk production, placing them in newly built stables [35]. In the process of transforming these farmsteads into rural hotel, there has been a common pattern. For example, the old stables have been replaced by a living-dining room, where they now offer recreation and meals to visitors. In some cases, the doors of the stable are now used as the new front door to the hotel. In other cases, the one in the kitchen, which used to be the old main entrance, is now re-used for this new purpose. Bedrooms are mostly located on the upper floor to preserve guests' privacy, thus creating a public–private gradient between the ground floor and the upper floor, which already existed when they were farms [36]. Other external units that have also lost their agricultural use, such as barns, are transformed either into more bedrooms or into multipurpose spaces for guests (for meetings or as a party room, for example). In many of these houses, the kitchen remains the main indoor social space, where a great deal of reproduction work is carried out. The main difference is that family, relatives and friends, who used to meet there in an atmosphere of familiarity, have now been replaced by visitors and clients (see Figures 6–11).

Figure 6. Rural hotel in Monfero. Author: Jose A. Cortes-Vazquez.

Figure 7. Rural hotel in Monfero. Author: Jose A. Cortes-Vazquez.

Figure 8. Rural hotel in Monfero. Author: Jose A. Cortes-Vazquez.

Figure 9. Open areas around a rural hotel. Author: Jose A. Cortes-Vazquez.

Figure 10. Old stables turned into a living room. Author: Jose A. Cortes-Vazquez.

Figure 11. Abandoned farmstead. Author: Jose A. Cortes-Vazquez.

Such changes are also evident in the meadows and open spaces surrounding the houses, which now have ambiguous purposes: they are both the site of guests' recreational uses as well as production spaces for the hotel owners. Their physical appearance has changed just a little as their maintenance to fulfill this dual function requires gardening work with mower and other tools, among other things. Paradoxically, these same activities were also carried out in the past in order to have free spaces, for example, to winnow the grain. This is just an example of how tourism practice can support pre-existing activities (e.g., grass cutting), but with different meanings and for different reasons.

3.2. The New Times and Pace of Tourism

The transformation of farmsteads from spaces for milk and livestock production into spaces of tourist consumption has also entailed a change in the pace and temporary markers that structure the daily life of their inhabitants. We could say that the time in Monfero's rural hotels is circular, mimicking in some way the times of the farming society in which they are inserted. Just like in other touristic areas, they live in cycles of high and low seasons. The high season corresponds to the summer, which is also the time of greatest work in the primary sector: harvest, meadow-making and silage. More specifically, August is the busiest month, with almost 100% occupancy in nearly all the hotels in the area and when the highest revenue is generated, which is essential to withstanding the long low season. This is then followed by July in terms of occupancy level, when hotels are usually fully booked during the weekends, although with some available rooms during weekdays.

Customers who come in high season are mostly from outside Galicia: Madrid, Catalonia and Andalusia. Rarely do people come from the neighboring cities of Coruña or Ferrol to stay at the houses, because they are close enough for day visits. Foreign tourists (English, German, French, Portuguese, Italian, Australian) are also relatively rare compared to national visitors. Customers are mostly families or groups of families. They stay for several days, using the hotels as "headquarters" from which to visit much of Galicia (Santiago de Compostela, Coruña, Lugo, Las Catedrales beach, the Cíes Islands). Therefore, it is not the uniqueness of the area and the proximity to the Fragas do Eume natural park that attract them, but the possibility of reaching out to other points in Galicia with relative ease, while having a quiet place with extensive green areas for young children to enjoy in the evenings.

Spring and Autumn are the shoulder season: the time to do preparatory work (such as small fixings and gardening) now that there is no need to spend all day receiving clients and cleaning rooms. This season is characterized by a small but constant flux of visitors (one or perhaps two occupied rooms each weekend). On weekdays there are usually no customers, with the exception of public holidays, such as Easter, or some long weekends (e.g., during regional festivities). The type of visitor changes, and, though some families still come, the majority of them are groups of friends or couples without children, mainly from urban areas from southern Galicia (Vigo, Pontevedra). They come to visit the natural park, do some hiking and other forms of active tourism in the surrounding area.

The rest of the year, from November to April, the hotels are practically empty. It is the long low season, when the only economic activity in Monfero is farming and forestry (which also have their own low season at this time of the year). One of the main reasons for this strong seasonality has to do with the local climate. Short days, frequent rains, wet and cold, make the area not especially attractive for visiting the park and enjoying outdoor activities in the surroundings. Thus, weather constraints are another shared feature between farming and tourism, albeit in different ways. While too much rain is not usually a problem for local farmers, the lack of it is a major challenge as it affects grazelands and access to water (most houses have a locally sourced, spring water supply). Inversely, long periods of warm and sunny days are ideal for tourism.

Given this situation, there are owners and managers who close the hotels in the low season and open them only if they have a reservation. This is the case mainly for those hotels whose owner or manager do not live on the premises or in the surrounding area. This allows them to save energy from heating, for instance. Only one hotel has taken serious actions to reduce the seasonality: they have created a second, high season in winter, the so-called "gastronomical season". They rent the hotel for family or friend meetings that come to enjoy a traditional winter meal: the Galician stew (cocidos). In addition to the stews, they also offer language immersion courses with foreign students that stay at the hotel.

As we see, seasonality has a strong influence in the rhythms of work, generating a new circular annual calendar that resembles that of the farming sector. The kind of tourist offer that predominates in Monfero, which is affected negatively by the generally rainy and cold weather, is one of the main obstacles. As a result, external economic support is needed from other sectors. It is common that a member of the household works elsewhere or receives a pension, which is also frequent in dairy farms. Yet tourism seasonality is not only a problem for the hotels, but also for the entire community. After all, these are houses that are empty most part of the year, like so many other houses that have been abandoned as a result of farm closures and migration. In such conditions, they fail to fulfil their production, reproduction and symbolic functions. We will further delve into this issue in following sub-sections.

3.3. Old and New Ways of Working and Living

The development of tourism also hinges on new work cultures and skills. Like elsewhere [3], a majority of rural hotels are managed by women. One of these hotels is run by the owners' daughter (around 40 years old) who lives in another house several meters away within the same hamlet. Their hotel is a large, old farm where the family lived until the 1980s. It was closed when a new,

modern house was built several meters away. In the 1990s it was then restored into a hotel. The mother of the current manager was in charge until she retired a few years ago, when her daughter took over the business. A brother manages an adjoining farm.

A second hotel was run by several different people during the development of this research. It is owned by a 60-year old woman who is not from the area. She bought it in the mid-2000s with the purpose of starting a new life in a natural environment, which resembles the kind of neo-rural and amenity movements described elsewhere [33]. After long restoration works and a large economic investment, she lost interest and left the area. She found the lack of basic supplies (Internet, suitable connection to the power grid) and/or the difficulties in obtaining them very frustrating. When we started our research, the hotel was managed by a 45-year old woman with family ties in the area. She had a job elsewhere and could only be at the hotel during the weekends, so she had hired another person to do the daily cleaning and gardening work. However, she found the hotel barely profitable and quit one year later. There were new managers the second year of our research: this time a 35-year old couple who was not from the area, but who lived in the house. He worked in the forestry sector and she ran the hotel. They also quit after several months.

Similarly, a 50-year old couple managed another hotel, but did not own it. They were not from the area and had only moved there recently for a change of life, bringing all their furniture and a tourism project with the aim to diversify activities so as not to offer only accommodation. The actual owners were also neo-rurals that had stopped running the hotel rather recently. One member of the couple (the man) kept his job as a consultant outside the area, as he could work from home. She was in charge of the management of the rural house (reservations, cleaning, catering). The owners of the other two studied hotels shared many common characteristics: retired women around 65 years old, who did not live in the area permanently but who had strong bonds since the house had been their parents' and grandparents' home. Like so many other people in the area, they had moved decades before to bigger towns for work reasons. In one case, the house had been abandoned after the death of their parents. In another case, restoration commenced before their parents had passed away. In both cases, the main motivation was the possibility of restoring and preserving a house with which they maintained a strong emotional attachment.

For all these eight women, past and present owners and managers, starting work in the hotels meant a new experience with apparently little relation to what they had done before. There has been a learning process in order to know how to deal with customers, where the main source of knowledge had been their new day-to-day experiences running the hotels. They have learned how to differentiate between different types of customers, particularly between the kind of friendly customer who seeks more direct and personal contact with the local community and who wants to feel like a friend or a relative who has been invited to the house, and the more independent type of client, who desires a more aseptic and distant treatment. Knowing what each customer is looking for is important to modulate their interaction. They have also learned how to take care of clients: new skills that can be considered a form of affective work. This includes, for example, offering a good breakfast, offering the possibility for a late dinner when guests do not feel like eating out, interacting with their young children, guessing which room they would appreciate the most, adding small details for each customer (such as a little bottle of cava to a newlywed couple, an earlier breakfast for an elite athlete who competes in a mountain race, a kosher meal for a Jewish customer, or a long chat with those who cannot go out for a walk because of bad weather).

It is not coincidental that this kind of affective work in hotels is carried out mostly by women, who in this area have been historically responsible for all the caring work of dependents and family members. The development of tourism in Monfero has thus mimicked women's role in the local family farms, where they carry out a significant part of productive work and all reproductive work. In fact, in most farms, women do as much production work as men. If there is something that they tend to be less involved, it is working with agricultural machinery, which is often handled by men. This minor

difference reappears again in the rural hotels, where men tend to be the ones who operate the lawn mowers or do plumbing or electrical work, for example.

3.4. Redefining and Reinforcing Community Interactions

Before the development of tourism, the chances for any women to find waged work outside the municipality or even outside their farms were very limited. During the process of specialization in dairy production, the need for extra income in farms became widespread due to the significant indebtedness produced by the purchase of milk quota, the different technical improvements needed and the decrease and volatility in milk prices with the CAP reforms during the 1990s. This extra income started to come from waged jobs "outside" the farm or from the pensions of older relatives. Normally, these non-farm jobs (often in the industrial sector, since Ferrol is quite close, or in the construction sector in coastal towns) were carried out by men. As a result, in many farms most of the productive workload ended up being carried out by women, who on top of that were also in charge of all reproductive work, which no men would carry out. This not only includes the work inside the house (cooking, cleaning), but also looking after children, the elderly and dependents in general, as well as taking care of the orchards, greenhouses, and different crops for self-consumption.

Unsurprisingly, it is mostly women who work in rural hotels (both in management, services and cleaning). Tourism jobs are a unique "way of being" in the local community that allows them to contribute to their domestic economies and even to be able to have economic and labor independence. Local gender relations have had a similar effect both on local women and newcomers: tourism (and the service sector in general) is for them one of the few livelihood options to live in this area as an economically independent person. Unlike the women already living in the area or with family ties in the local community, for those who have come from outside the local community (mostly urbanites, which is the case of several owners and managers), it has been a life change, as they had to adapt to a new way of establishing social relations, with its advantages and disadvantages. Getting used to having closer relationships with their neighbors and giving up their independent urban lifestyle might have been attractive to some of these newcomers, but not for all. Despite this difference between the locals and the newcomers, tourism has been an opportunity to gain a new livelihood that allows both of them to remain in the area.

The development of tourism also hinges on a close relationship and interaction with the local community network because the lack of infrastructure and relative isolation compared to urban contexts often requires a great deal of social capital. In the event, for example, that a boiler breaks down in one of the hotels during the weekend, the only quick fix to avoid disappointed clients is to ask for a favor to any neighbor with some plumbing skills, since the alternative would be to wait a couple of days for the arrival of a technician from the city. At a broader level, the very tourist activity depends on a resilient farming community and the persistence of the kind of farming activities that preserves landscape values and holds back the expansion of eucalyptus plantations and shrublands. This idea of a resilient community is also constantly present in family farms' demands when they deal with the problems in their sector. The moral economy approach allows us to see that although these demands are raised as particular claims about the price or production costs, their actual goal is to preserve not only a livelihood, but the community as a whole.

Parts of the interactions with the local community also involve different forms of collaboration between rural hotels and other businesses. While at the beginning of the tourism development process such collaborations were more frequent, as the years went by, and especially after the 2008 economic crisis, they faded away as competition to attract visitors increased. Even the more informal interactions, such as the exchange of clients in case of no vacancies, are no longer frequent. Other kinds of collective work are also largely absent, for example, organizing joint demands against the damage caused by the expansion of eucalyptus trees to the touristic appeal of the area, joining forces in their problematic relationship with big multinationals like *Booking*, or protesting because of the lack of involvement of the park in tourism promotion. While all hotel owners and managers are aware of the importance of

the park and its touristic appeal, some of them are also unhappy about its role in tourism. Firstly, the hotels are located outside the natural park. The park is mainly limited to sloped areas around the Eume river. Many hotels are far away from the main entry points to the park. There are two types of access: one rather comfortable, by car or bus, from the lower part of the park, next to the mouth of the Eume river in Pontedeume; and another one, less well indicated and promoted, through the various trekking routes that have been created in the highest part of the park, far away from the coast, tens of kilometers upstream. As such, the main access is located 25 km from the most remote hotels in Monfero, and this is why at least two of the hotels studied do not show it as one of the main attractions. Trekking access is also limited to the few routes created, leaving most of the protected area without signed routes and therefore without the proper infrastructure for visitors to access the park. In addition, the limitations imposed by the park, for example, on the cutting of trees, together with the abandonment of traditional activities and the threat of the expansion of eucalyptus plantations has led to the presence of too many scrubs and woods that also hinder outdoor activities for tourists. Only in the cases where there is a personal affinity between the owners and managers of hotels, bars and restaurants, there seems to be a closer relationship which involves visiting each other, mutual invitations when they meet at the local tavern, borrowing tools or doing personal favors.

Not having a professional association of tourist owners and managers also impedes a more horizontal and symmetrical relationship with the authorities and public administration. For example, there is not much communication between park managers and rural hotels. The latter barely participate in the park's advisory board and the park itself is investing little in tourism. This lack of interlocution has worsened with Euroeume's (The Local Action Group that managed the LEADER funding across the Eume region) loss of economic capacity and influence after EU LEADER funding declined. The Monfero municipal council does not seem to have a proactive attitude towards tourism either. As a result, any collective initiative regarding tourism is now fragmented, which also mimics the situation of the farming sector, a situation that is not accidental. In fact, many of the practices that lead to this widespread socioeconomic fragmentation in the region, such as secrecy when talking about milk prices, or the competition and division between farmers, reappear among hotel owners. Further, in both cases, they derive from the actions of external agents and policies. As an example, among farmers it is common to find experiences in which o leiteiro (the dairy industry worker that collects the milk) tries to convince farmers that he is paying them a better price than their neighbors, but that they had to keep it secret. Many of them understand that in reality the price is just the same low price for all farmers, but in this way the dairy industry promotes competitiveness, secrecy and isolation between producers. Something similar has happened in the tourist sector: as the 2008 economic crisis reduced the number of visitors and tourists, the problems to attracting tourists generated widespread secrecy about the price of rooms and number of clients. Such tendencies are not helped by the fact that most hotels have ended up being managed by people who come from outside the area and who did not keep previous ties with the local community.

3.5. Future Prospects

Just like for dairy farms, the future of rural hotels does not look too bright. During the period of this research, several hotels had closed or were for sale. Sometimes this coincided with the end of the period to keep the hotel open that the owners had committed to in order to receive LEADER funding. Such situation might suggest that the development of tourism did not work out well in Monfero. In some cases, the key reason was economic: the high season is too short, as we already saw. But in other cases, the reasons were also moral. For example, in one case, the owner felt too old and tired and wanted to retire. She was considering selling the hotel, both for economic and emotional reasons. While the cheapest hotel for sale costed 250,000 euros, and the most expensive 800,000 euros, she also felt that, by selling it, the house would stay open, would stay "alive".

Economic and moral motivations are also intertwined among those owners and managers that came from outside this area. They wanted to live in a more natural and rural place—what we elsewhere refer to as "natural idylls" [37], but this faded away when the difficulties generated by living in a context with a lack of infrastructure, low economic returns and little support from public administration overweighed their desire for an alternative life. On the contrary, a communitarian motivation seems to underpin the most successful hotels: the motivation of those who want to live off tourism not just as a business endeavor that must be self-sufficient, but as part of a collective familiar economy, where tourism is just a complement to other sources of income.

4. Discussion

Quantitatively, the impacts of tourism in the re-population and amelioration of the socioeconomic problems of Monfero have been very limited, even though the gains do not remain merely in hotels. In fact, these are somehow distributed rhizomatically [38]: other houses that do not have the required conditions to become hotels (small houses that belong to families of a humbler class) may also benefit as members of their household do part-time jobs (hotel cleaning, catering, gardening). This limited socioeconomic performance is not exclusive to Monfero, but applies to Galicia in general. As Pereiro [39] and Rodil [40] argue, while different modalities of successful rural tourism abound in the region (e.g., [41]), the actual involvement of farming communities in tourism is very small and therefore does not contribute to redressing marginalization and de-agrarianization. Similar problems have been identified in other parts of Spain and elsewhere [3].

As shown in one of the initial vignettes, this limited impact generates frustration amid local community members: the ideal for them would be a number of successful tourism initiatives that, combined with solid farming businesses, would ameliorate the socioeconomic problems of the area. Whether these hotels are run by locals or not, does not seem to be an issue as far as it is the local community as a whole who benefits from the diversification of the local economy. This is why, even though there is a rather convivial relationship between locals and newcomers working in tourism, some community members would insist that it is the "locals" who should benefit from tourism. This is the reason why moral values must be at the core of our analysis.

Qualitatively, as we can see in the ethnographic data presented in this paper, the development of tourism in Monfero has brought about a number of important changes, with different repercussions: new temporalities merge with and replicate those of the surrounding agrarian society, with its peak of work in summer and the slow life of the winter season; changing attitudes towards the local weather (perhaps crucial in the current context of climate change); new uses and shapes for farmhouses and adjacent buildings as stables are turned into living rooms and kitchens, threshing floors into gardens, barns into bedrooms or meeting rooms. More crucially, farmhouses are no longer exclusively the site of both production and reproduction (of the family, the household and the entire community, materially and symbolically). With their transformation into hotels, they are now also the site of consumption, where (and from where) the socio-ecological systems that permit production and reproduction in the farming sector (the mosaic landscape, the familiarity and close community, the local products, the relaxing atmosphere) are consumed by tourists in multiple different ways, as usually happens in contexts of rural tourism and agritourism [42]. Although critical studies of tourism would traditionally see this pretense of authenticity as the sign of superfluous touristic consumption [43], in fact it is not only serving the houses, but also the entire farming socio-ecosystem, to regenerate itself in a creative way without altering its form and functions significantly. In other words, in the case of Monfero, tourism contributes (at least qualitatively) to socio-ecological resilience by adding new functions to some domestic and non-domestic spaces. This is another reason why moral values must be at the core of our analysis.

As Lew et al. [26] argue, the notion of sustainability alone (e.g., the focus on conserving community resources, maintaining traditional uses or preserving traditions) is insufficient to explore the impacts of tourism. Only by combining it with the notion of resilience (e.g., the focus on community capacity for

change, creating new knowledge, improving living conditions) we can identify whether rural tourism communities are becoming more dynamic and successful. In the case of Monfero, we can see the interplay between sustainability and resilience in two key aspects. Firstly, tourism experiences have mostly involved women, both local and neo-rural. In this sense, the development of tourism operates ambiguously within existing power relations, determined by gender and economic precarity, whereby women unfairly carry out a great deal of production work at farms, as well as all the reproduction work at home. This has traditionally impeded them from taking up much-needed waged jobs outside the house and the community, as men do. However, by accessing jobs in the tourist sector wherein affective and care work near their homes are essential, some women have found a niche to become economically independent. This kind of independence is only relative, since tourism activities, as they are currently organized, are not profitable enough to make these jobs an exclusive form of livelihood. In fact, tourism in Monfero seems only viable when combined with other economic activities as part of one household. As such, it has not replaced existing economic activities, nor it has radically changed social structures and dynamics. Instead, it just opens a new but limited horizon of possibility for one social group (women) that largely complies with some existing socioeconomic dynamics, while also offering the chance for subtle changes.

Secondly, the dimension of consumption that the development of tourism brings about extends to the whole territory of Monfero, not just the hotels. The practices of the farming sector that characterize this area have given shape to valuable landscape qualities that have now become also an attraction to tourists (and which are threatened by land abandonment and the expansion of eucalyptus plantations). Preserving landscapes is part of the work of spectacularization and commoditization that comes with tourism [44]. But, in the case of Monfero, such preservation cannot be simply carried out by a centralizing institution, as the case of the limited reach of the Fragas do Eume natural park reveals. It is the result of the day-to-day interaction of the local community with their surrounding environment [30]. The farming landscape is a living landscape that changes continuously with the crop season, with the creation of meadows, with the collection of wood for home consumption. The very idea of preservation relies on the continuation of these practices, which thus depends on the resilience of the local community's lifestyle and livelihood in the primary sector. There is, therefore, a dialectical connection between the consumption dimension of tourism, the diversification (and not the substitution) of the local farming economy, and the commitment to enhance the resilience of the local socio-ecosystem.

5. Conclusions

It is true that very few rural tourism initiatives have been created in Monfero in the last few decades, and some of them have already closed down. Few members of the local community have benefitted from these initiatives and several hotels were opened and run by people coming from urban areas looking for a change of life and/or to make an investment. However, limiting our analysis to these undeniable facts would impede out ability to understand the actual implications of the few tourism initiatives that have emerged in the last few decades. As we have demonstrated in this paper, a moral economy lens that focuses on the importance of moral values in tourism practices permits us to explore why tourism can be considered as a community binding tool with a great deal of potential.

It is not simply that tourism seeks to commoditize and give economic value to those experiences that are considered as typical of a small farming community, as well as to the landscape mosaic that is the result of certain farming practices. It is also that, through a particular way of carrying out tourism, such experiences and such landscape can be preserved. We can find such moral values inserted in the idea that the transformation of these farmsteads into hotels implies their "life" and continuity, in a context in which the house plays a central role in the local socio-ecosystem. These moral values, directly linked to the sphere of local social reproduction, are also specifically present in day-to-day actions that imply a direct relationship with the clients; a relationship that is established in a way closer to the kind of affective-care work that is typical of reproductive tasks.

It is also necessary to consider these moral values because they help us explain why the development of tourism fails or succeeds when we consider it as a set of practices that are inserted into various strategies that have to do with resilience. In this sense, tourism should not be approached as an activity in isolation, but as part of a set of strategies in which the development of tourism is inserted. These strategies ultimately have to do with moral values that hinge on the idea that, in the end, the ultimate goal of any economic activity (be it food production or tourism) is the continuation of the local community and their socio-ecosystem. Production, no matter the economic sector, is here understood as the key to community reproduction. But the resilience of community and socio-ecosystems does not mean immobility. Just the contrary, it also leaves room for changes that can improve the lives of some community members. This is evident in the analysis of the gender dimension of the development of tourism: The fact that women in the area enter the labor market through this type of work, which allows them to earn some income independently, while at the same time they continue to be jobs that are directly linked to care and to the family household.

As we can see, an analysis of how tourism in Monfero might contribute to socio-ecological resilience is rather complex and involves a careful examination not only of the number of visitors, overnight stays or number of beds available. More importantly, it requires an examination of the moral values of this economic activity; in other words, of tourism as a meaningful and value-oriented practice. Looking at the changing senses of day-to-day activities such as grass mowing, of the material transformations carried out in houses, and of the personal experiences of some groups such as women, we can reach a more detailed understanding of how tourism can contribute to the resilience of the local socio-ecosystem, the ambiguous outcomes and limits of such contributions, and how things could turn out differently. These are the keys to what could be considered a promising new field in tourism studies: the moral ecology of tourism.

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