

Comparing perceptions of nature in
Camargue through the local feasts
study.

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Migrants in Camargue

- Italian (end of 19th century)
- North-Africans (Pieds-noirs, harkis)
- North-Africans (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia)
- Spanish (early 20th, retirada, 1960-1970)

Interplay between the interactions with nature
and the construction of identities

The case of Spanish migrants in Mauguio

- Migration from Lorca (province of Murcia)
- Started early 20th century
- Agricultural workers
- 1954, cold winter, vineyard transformed to vegetables by spanish migrants
- 1975. End of migration
- Trans-national group

Romeria del encuentro: the creation

- Created in 1989, 15 years after the end of migration.
- The context:
 - the loss of sense of the traditional « fête votive »
 - Willingness to « please » the spanish population (elections)
 - Initiated

Transformations

- 3 periods
 - The inter-cultural encounter
 - The definition of identity through exclusion (the external frontier)
 - The definition of social and religious identity (the internal frontier)

The romeria vs the « fête votive »

- Fête votive:
 - One week, 15 of August.
 - All city + linkages with the manades. Start the day in the field and move to the city.
 - Organised by « young people » (formerly before going to the army), kind of rite of passage.
 - Games with bulls
 - Bulls driven by gardians, game = try to make them escape
 - Bulls in the circus (arène), the bull defend their attributes and territory against humans.
 - Interpretation: The bull represents the identity defending himself against the thieves.
 - The humans are all dressed in white, no hierarchy. They are sportsmen.
 - Bulls are selected to be clever, unpredictable, vicious,
 - Formalisation of this identity at the end of 19th, early 20th during tensions between regional identity and national authority. Creation of nature and relationships with nature (selection of the bull)
 - Values: Equality and liberty



The romeria vs the fête votive

- La romeria del encuentro
 - 3 days
 - Part of the city with casetas (eating, drinking, dancing)
 - Strict rules on specific food, specific drinks
 - Sevillanas dances contests
 - Games with bulls: the corrida
 - Bulls are selected to be strong, courageous, franc, straightforward.
 - The human express his soul transforming the strength of the animal into an art
 - Different status, hierarchy among humans
 - Religious procession: carry the virgen of the farmers from the pond to the church
 - An on-going process of creation, bricolage of an identity.
 - Values: control, elegance, respect of rules.

The romeria vs the fête votive

- Very different values expressed through the feasts. Two types of relationships with wilderness through the relationship with the bull.
- People are doing the two, they are from Camargue and also transnational people
- A common opponent: the inhabitant of big cities who have no relationships with wilderness. Raising Spanish or Camarguian bulls is a way of controlling the urbanization.

Conclusion : acting for sustainable development?

- Perceptions, practices of nature are mobilized for power games (example: PNC)
- Actual tensions (region-state-nation, among ethnic groups).
 - Peri-urban problematics
 - The emerging role of religion?
- Study of the dynamics of feasts and celebrations to reveal the representations and symbolic use of nature, the relations between groups
- Usefulness for sustainability?