Slash Workers in the Alps: Exploratory Research on Rural Multi-Job Holding (MJH)

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Executive Summary

This report explores the phenomenon of multi-activity and multiple job holding (MJH) in mountain and rural areas of the EUSALP region, focusing on its role in supporting individual livelihoods, local economies, and territorial resilience. Drawing on qualitative interviews with young residents in Trentino and Val d'Isère, the study examines the motivations, configurations, and consequences of multi-activity, as well as its interaction with digitalisation, social networks, and seasonal labour patterns.

Key findings include:

- *Diverse motivations:* Multi-activity ranges from economic necessity and risk management to personal fulfilment, skill development, and identity expression. These individuals combine traditional land-based practices with tourism, cultural, creative, or digital activities.
- *Territorial embeddedness:* Multi-activity allows young people to remain in rural areas despite limited full-time employment, strengthening community cohesion, cultural vitality, and environmental stewardship.
- *Digital opportunities and constraints:* Digital tools facilitate the management of multiple jobs, expand markets, and enable remote work, but adoption is uneven and can introduce new forms of stress and social isolation.
- *Challenges and risks:* MJH can generate work overload, precarious income, and relational strain. Without adequate support, multi-activity risks undermining both individual well-being and long-term rural sustainability.

Policy implications suggest the need to:

- Map and monitor the distribution, drivers, and quality of multi-activity using quantitative and qualitative tools.
- Strengthen social protections, fair wages, and working conditions for those engaging in MJH by necessity.
- Invest in education, skills, and digital infrastructure to enable multi-activity as a choice-driven strategy for empowerment and territorial resilience.

Future research should explore differences between newcomers and lifelong residents, the evolution of hybrid and non-agricultural work, and the long-term effects of multi-activity on rural vitality. By recognising both its potential and its risks, multi-activity can be leveraged as a central component of sustainable mountain development.

Outline

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Introduction

The project explores the phenomenon of **multi-activity** (slash workers) in mountain professions in the EUSALP area countries, analysing its potential as a **lever for social inclusion**, particularly for young people, and as a **factor of resilience for Alpine territories**. The analysis aims to produce knowledge useful for defining public policies aimed at combating depopulation, promoting hybrid forms of work and developing innovative professional skills, also in relation to the **digital and ecological transition**.

The report is divided into three main parts. The first part (section 1) explores the international sociological literature on multi-activity, with a particular focus on rural areas. This is followed by a description of the methodology used to conduct the empirical research (section 2). Section 3 presents the analysis of the interviews, organised around six thematic areas. Finally, Section 4 concludes the report opening up new avenues for future research. The Appendix contains the methodological tools developed for the research: the interview guide and the questionnaire.

1. Literature review

1.1 Different definitions of multi-activity

Engaging in more than one job is considered a growing phenomenon in the European labour market (Soru & Zanni, 2020). *Multiple job holding* refers to the act of performing more than one job simultaneously, including both paid employment and self-employment, where all tasks are carried out in exchange for, or in expectation of, remuneration (Campion et al., 2019). This phenomenon has been conceptualised in various ways, leading to a certain degree of conceptual ambiguity. To address its complexity, scholars have employed a range of terms,

often with overlapping definitions and varying nuances. Among these are the notions of *slash work*, *moonlighting*, *pluriactivity*, *hybrid entrepreneurship* and *plural careerism*.

Slash workers are individuals who combine multiple professional roles. These workers are often particularly active and dynamic among those in alternative forms of employment (e.g. independent professionals) and contingent workers (those in short-term or low-intensity employment) (Soru & Zanni, 2020). Another widely used, although more connotated term is *moonlighting*, which refers to those who engage in a second job, typically at night (Campion et al., 2019). Hybrid entrepreneurs is a term used to indicate individuals who are simultaneously employed and in the process of starting their own business (Murgia & Pulignano, 2021; Thorgren et al., 2016). Finally, plural careerists are those who pursue multiple jobs at the same time for reasons related to identity or personal fulfilment rather than purely financial motives (Caza et al., 2018).

The concept of *pluriactivity* is narrower in scope than MJH, as it generally refers in particular to the combination of farming with other economic activities by agricultural households (Robertson, 2008), where these activities can be distinguished between on-farm and off-farm (Dickey, 2006; Kristensen et al., 2020; López-i-Gelats et al., 2011). The term *pluriactivity* was introduced to describe the diversification of labour and agricultural activity into alternative fields, including employment and the development of off-farm enterprises, as well as the diversification of agriculture into new ventures such as tourism in the context of a post-agriculture countryside (Kasimis & Papadopoulos, 2013).

1.2 Who are multiple job holders and why they have more than one job

From a socio-demographic standpoint, people engaged in multiple job holding tend to be more highly educated than the average workforce, although there is also a strong presence among low-income and low-skilled workers (Soru & Zanni, 2020; Eurofound 2020). These workers are often younger (Eurofound, 2020), although, for example, for older farmers and

accommodation providers, MJH can represent a semi-retirement strategy (Robertson et al., 2008).

The motivations behind this work strategy, as well as its consequences, range from economic necessity and survival to well-being and personal fulfilment (Campion et al., 2019; Eurofound, 2020). In their comprehensive literature review, Campion et al. (2019) classify the reasons for holding multiple jobs into ***push*** factors (economic necessity or constraints) and ***pull*** factors (career opportunities or personal fulfilment).

Considering the former, the need to generate additional income represents the main motivation for having more than one job, particularly as a way to supplement insufficient earnings from one's primary job. In this case, frequently, MJH serves as a means of financial survival (Campion et al., 2019; Dickey, 2006; Eurofound, 2020; Robertson, 2006; Robertson et al., 2008). Some workers are pushed to seek a second job because their main employment offers too few hours to secure the desired income, or because its pay is insufficient to cover household expenses (Eurofound, 2020; Pérez de Guzmán Padrón et al., 2024; Unni, 1996). In addition, the seasonality of work in sectors such as agriculture or accommodation can drive individuals to seek complementary employment to ensure income continuity throughout the year (Robertson, 2006). Holding multiple jobs can also be viewed as a way to reduce total income variability, acting as a form of risk diversification, particularly relevant for self-employed workers such as fishers or farmers (Dickey et al., 2006). Indeed, *pluriactivity* plays an important role in the livelihood strategies of farming families (Dickey, 2006; Kinsella, 2000), allowing them to achieve income levels unattainable through a single job and supporting their investment goals (such as land acquisition for young farmers), as well as ensuring them greater independence (Robertson et al., 2008).

Turning to pull factors, personal fulfilment and various non-economic benefits emerge as important drivers. In this case, available research reports how choosing to hold multiple jobs responds to the desire of variety and stimulation at work, finding enjoyment and interest in

what they do (Pérez de Guzmán Padrón et al., 2024; Robertson, 2006; Robertson et al., 2008). Among these multiple job holders, some describe the second job as a “hobby” (Dickey, 2006; Robertson, 2006). MJH can also provide opportunities for social contact and friendship (Robertson, 2006). Moreover, some workers pursue a second job to achieve professional aspirations and monetise a passion project (Caza et al., 2018; Pérez de Guzmán Padrón et al., 2024). In addition, MJH can be part of a strategy to initiate a new career path, where the second job serves as a stepping stone, for instance, towards self-employment (as in the case of hybrid entrepreneurs), or as a means to explore alternative career routes (heterogeneous jobs or job portfolio models) (Eurofound, 2020; Thorgren et al., 2016). From this perspective, taking on a second job allows individuals to acquire new skills and accumulate work experience (Kawakami, 2019).

1.3 Multiple job holding in different sectors

Agriculture

Historically, the first line of research on Multiple Job Holding developed precisely in relation to agricultural work, defining *pluriactivity* as the combination of farming with other economic activities carried out by members of the farming household (Fuller et al., 1991 as cited in Kinsella et al., 2000). Pluriactivity is by no means exclusively a new phenomenon in mountain regions. For instance, in the Apennines, economic pluriactivity and seasonal migration (such as transhumance) were widespread forms of subsistence, far removed from specialisation (Ciuffetti, 2019). For small, marginal, or struggling farms, the need to supplement income is the main motivation for diversification (Kinsella et al., 2000; Robertson et al., 2008; Salvioni et al., 2014). On the other hand, emotional attachment or family tradition often leads individuals or households to maintain a farming activity even when it is less profitable, balancing it with a second job (Kinsella et al., 2000). In some mountain and coastal areas, tourism represents the main source of supplementary income (Kasimis & Papadopoulos, 2013; Robertson et al., 2008).

Mountain areas are particularly exposed to vulnerability, and MJH represents an essential component of adaptation strategies. Mountain farming faces permanent natural handicaps (altitude, slope, climate) that limit production alternatives and reduce productivity, resulting in a high risk of land abandonment (López-i-Gelats et al., 2016). In a study conducted in the Pyrenees, farms rely on off-farm employment in the tertiary sector or on pensions to sustain the household.

Tourism

There is little research specifically addressing MJH and tourism, other than as a main form of agricultural diversification. More broadly, in the services sector in Europe (Eurofound, 2020; Soru & Zanni, 2020), workers holding multiple jobs are often found in service and sales occupations. In low-paid service sectors such as retail and catering, multiple job holding appears to be more common, often attributed to financial necessity and the limited working hours offered by the main job.

The prevalence of non-standard work arrangements (such as part-time and temporary contracts) in these sectors is reinforced by fluctuating labour demand and the unpredictability of work, especially in the case of seasonal tourism flows (Robertson, 2006). The SWIRL study also highlights the growing relevance of platform work in this context, including activities such as tourist accommodation management (e.g. via Airbnb) (Soru & Zanni, 2020).

A study in New Zealand (Robertson, 2006) found that accommodation management was adopted by several participants as a secondary income-generating activity. Similarly, a study in Greece on multi-activity (Kasimis & Papadopoulos, 2013) revealed that individuals often held two or three different occupations: a farmer might cultivate the land, be employed in construction or agri-food/hospitality enterprises, and also work in the tertiary sector (e.g. renting rooms or running a small business).

Cultural and Creative Sectors

Holding multiple jobs is a defining feature of professional careers in the cultural and creative sectors, often associated with the notion of *portfolio careers* and indeed artists are a particularly significant example of multiple job holders (Ashton, 2023; Throsby & Zednik, 2011).

Artistic careers are typically characterised by lower financial rewards compared to other occupations requiring similar levels of human capital (education, training, experience), making income supplementation necessary (Eurofound, 2020). A widespread strategy is the adoption of a *dual-career* model (see also the concept of *pluricareerists* in Caza et al., 2018), seeking a balance between self-fulfilment at work and economic sustainability. This strategy involves combining a primary job that "pays the bills" with a meaningful secondary activity that, while not providing sufficient income, represents a personal priority in terms of creative or professional fulfilment (Pérez de Guzmán Padrón et al., 2024). The second job may fall within the same cultural or creative field, but it can, and often does, belong to different sectors, a situation that some experience as a failure (Lindstrom, 2016).

In Europe, the Arts and Sports sector shows the highest proportion of *slash workers* (Soru & Zanni, 2020) and is experiencing strong growth; 17% of those working in this sector do so as a second job, compared with 8.5% as a primary occupation. A 2017 survey in Italy (*SLC-CGIL: Vita da artisti*) found that around 40% of creative professionals had to take on non-artistic work to supplement their income.

There is little explicit research on this topic in rural areas. Some studies report multi-activity as a frequent practice among those working in these sectors, while others describe how relocation to marginalised areas, where the cost of living is lower, has allowed some individuals to dedicate themselves primarily to artistic or creative work (see Alacovska et al., 2021; Mathisen et al., 2024).

1.4 Implications for local development

Multiple job holding, particularly through off-farm employment, functions as a vital financial support and risk management mechanism for rural and farming households, contributing directly to the stabilisation of local economies. From this perspective, MJH represents not only an individual coping strategy but also a structural component of rural resilience and territorial development, promoting the sustainability of rural communities (Dickey, 2006).

In economic terms, MJH and pluriactivity often emerge as adaptive strategies in response to agricultural crises and declining farm incomes (Lange et al., 2013). They serve as crucial survival mechanisms, particularly for small and marginal farms that would otherwise be at risk of abandonment (Morris et al., 2017; Salvioni, 2014). MJH supports the preservation of farm assets and provides greater opportunities for retirement and intergenerational succession within family farms (Robertson, 2008). While for some, pluriactivity is the result but in some way also a further cause of the marginalisation of agriculture in favour of other economic activities (López-i-Gelats et al., 2011), others highlight how pluriactivity can help farming households remain on the land, exerting a stabilising effect on the number of farms within a given region while also strengthening the basis for local services (Kinsella, 2000). Indeed, empirical evidence shows that in some contexts, pluriactive households generate more than half of total agricultural income and up to three-quarters of total household income (Kinsella, 2000).

MJH and diversification also represent structural features of post-industrial society and are closely linked to the ongoing transformation of rural areas towards a multifunctional model (Lange et al., 2013). Within this post-productive transition, MJH is an essential characteristic of what has been termed the “new rurality”, marked by the contraction of traditional agriculture and the expansion of tourism, services, and construction sectors (Bryden & Fuller, 1998; Kasimis & Papadopoulos, 2013). Pluriactivity thus constitutes a daily expression of rural

multifunctionality (Dubois & Carson, 2019), which itself is regarded as a key pathway towards achieving sustainable rural livelihoods (Huttunen, 2012; Kinsella, 2000).

Concrete examples of diversification include agritourism and recreational services, which are particularly widespread in rural areas where tourism provides a major source of economic diversification (Arru et al., 2019; Robertson, 2006). Such activities may improve farm incomes while contributing to the sustainability of rural territories (Arru et al., 2019). Another significant form of diversification involves renewable energy production, such as farm-based heat entrepreneurship (e.g. the generation of bioenergy from local forest resources) which can bring economic, social, and environmental benefits, and support sustainable development (Huttunen, 2012). In addition, on-farm business diversification, such as the use of underutilised farm buildings for non-agricultural purposes (e.g. offices, storage, or retail activities), can create new economic opportunities within rural areas, but can also favour gentrification processes (Kristensen et al., 2019; Sutherland, 2012).

The role of MJH in rural development is also strongly influenced by geographical factors, particularly the location of farms in relation to urban markets and their integration within regional dynamics. In peri-urban areas, MJH and diversification are facilitated by the availability of off-farm employment opportunities (Salvioni, 2014). Improved access to larger urban markets generates increased demand for retail, local public services, and leisure and cultural consumption, stimulating the growth of new economic activities (Kinsella, 2000; Kristensen et al., 2019; Unni, 1996). Consumer-oriented diversification activities, such as direct marketing and tourism services, are especially common and benefit from proximity to urban consumers (Lange et al., 2012; Monlorr & Fuller, 2016). The combination of rural attractiveness and urban accessibility thus creates development opportunities for rural entrepreneurs beyond the agricultural and forestry sectors, helping to counter economic and demographic decline (Lange et al., 2012). Furthermore, MJH may encourage entrepreneurship and innovation (Henley & Dowell 2017), as in the case of hybrid

entrepreneurs, who use wage employment as a safety net while launching new ventures (Thorgren et al., 2016).

1.5 Multi-activity and new residents

Despite the growing relevance of counter urbanisation, only a few studies look specifically at multiple job holding and pluriactivity from the perspective of the new residents. Newcomers to farming in particular are described as having a higher educational background compared to lifelong farmers (Kinsella et al., 2000; Monllor & Fuller, 2016). According to Monllor and Fuller (2016) in a study conducted in Ontario and Galicia, newcomers entering agriculture are likely to adopt pluriactive models connected to the "Agrosocial Paradigm" of the new rurality, privileging activities like horticulture that require lower capital investment and that can be handled together with supplementary income from other activities. The study by Kinsella et al. (2000) goes in similar direction as they identify ‘new pluriactivity’ “as a form of voluntarily chosen pluriactivity, mainly taken up by people who have lived away for some time and then purchased land or inherited a farm in the area” (p. 489), often carried out by people who were previously living in urban contexts. Their study highlights also the importance of ideological considerations for these households that tend to take more innovative choices as they do not feel constrained into a life or generation-long agricultural practice rooted in their families.

New residents, including amenity migrants, often relocate to mountain areas seeking a better quality of life, lower cost of living, proximity to nature, or a slower pace. For highly qualified workers, such as cultural and creative workers who relocate – a phenomenon sometimes called geographical downshifting (Alacovska et al., 2021) – MJH becomes a necessary strategy to sustain their primary artistic identity while offsetting financial precarity in a remote location (Mathisen et al., 2024).

What seems to emerge from this narrow strand of literature is the tendency of newcomers to place importance to lifestyle and personal fulfilment in their work activity, thus often requiring them to become multi-active.

1.6 The role of digitalisation in rural multiple job holding

The digital transformation of rural economies has intensified in recent years, reshaping how people live and work outside major urban centres. In rural and peripheral areas, information and communication technologies (ICTs) not only support the delivery of essential public services but also open up new forms of labour participation. In particular, digitalisation can influence the practice of holding multiple jobs in several ways.

One key development is the expansion of remote work, and especially platform-based models, which make multiple job holding more accessible and manageable. As a result, what was once regarded as traditional “moonlighting” is evolving into a contemporary hybrid or portfolio career model (Pérez De Guzmán Padrón et al., 2024). This reduces geographical constraints and increases temporal flexibility, although it also introduces new forms of precarity associated with technological and algorithmic management (Bérastégui, 2021).

Moreover, digitalisation also reshapes established professions more subtly by transforming work practices and reshaping their social and professional standing, as highlighted for example in discussions on “new craft” and digitally mediated artisanal labour (Gandini et al., 2025). It enables professionals to reach wider, extra-local markets, a trend evident across a range of work sectors in rural areas, including for instance cultural and creative work (Townsend et al., 2017). Also agricultural producers seem to benefit from digital tools, which can create new opportunities for small-scale farms (SSFs), including marketing specialty food as well as developing short supply chains and participating in alternative food networks (Salvioni et al., 2014). Considering the agricultural sector, Monllor and Fuller (2016) note that newcomers to farming are particularly likely to use ICTs, for instance by creating their own websites or building virtual communities through online networks, especially on diversified farms selling directly to urban consumers.

However, despite these advancements, there remains a research gap in understanding precisely how digitalisation is shaping practices of multiple job holding in rural contexts, suggesting the need for further empirical investigation.

2. Methodology of the research

Given the exploratory nature of the study, a predominantly qualitative approach was adopted, based on 19 semi-structured online interviews—16 with young people from Trentino and 3 with young people from Val d'Isère, France. The interviews followed a semi-structured format guided by a script organized into seven thematic sections (see Appendix). After collecting socio-demographic information, including age, education, and place of residence, the interviews examined participants' current work activities, post-school career trajectories, and the motivations behind their engagement in multi-activity, whether driven by deliberate choice or economic necessity. Additional sections explored the influence of rural living conditions, social and relational networks, digitalisation, and participants' perceptions of the benefits, risks, and future prospects associated with multi-activity. All interviews were analysed using Atlas.ti, enabling systematic coding and thematic interpretation.

Participants from Trentino were recruited through personal contacts and with support from managers of the Local Youth Plans, with the sample further expanded using snowball sampling. French participants were identified through AFRAT (Association pour la Formation des Ruraux aux Activités du Tourisme), an organisation supporting sustainable tourism development in rural and mountain areas via training, advice, and local initiatives.

As shown in Table 1, the sample includes 7 women and 12 men, with most aged between 20 and 35—a transitional period marked by the pursuit of economic stability, personal growth, and quality of life. Participants come from various valley contexts, mainly rural and mountain areas of Trentino, and most reside in small villages or valley floors for emotional or family reasons, or for economic considerations such as access to a family home or lower housing costs. Their educational backgrounds are diverse, ranging from hotel management and

mechanics to social sciences and conservatory studies. For some, returning to the valley reflected a desire to settle or a preference for rural life over cities; for others, it was a practical decision driven by the high costs of urban living.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Interview Participants

ID	Gender	Location	Occupation	Age	Education
1	M	Valle dell'Adige	Farmer / Factory worker	29	Secondary school diploma
2	F	Val di Non	Company secretary / Dog trainer	30	Secondary school diploma
3	M	Valle dell'Adige	Music teacher / Orchestra conductor	39	Music Conservatory diploma
4	F	Val di Ledro	Waitress / Employee in a tourist organization	24	Secondary school diploma
5	F	Brugraviato / Valle dell'Adige	Researcher / Freelance graphic designer	41	Master in Ecosocial Design
6	M	Val di Non	Karate instructor / Company technician	33	Secondary school diploma
7	F	Val di Fiemme / Val di Fassa / Belluno	Mountain guide / Ski instructor	26	Secondary school diploma
8	M	Altopiano di Folgaria, Lavarone, Luserna	Ski instructor / Mechanic	24	Secondary school diploma
9	F	Val di Fiemme / Val di Fassa	Snowboard instructor / Secretary	35	Secondary school diploma
10	F	Val di Fassa	B&B manager / Holistic practitioner	28	Secondary school diploma
11	M	Val di Sole	Beekeeping museum manager / Teacher	31	University degree in Arts
12	M	Val di Sole	Cableway operator / Project designer	26	Secondary school diploma
13	M	Val di Fassa	Teacher / Beekeeper	33	University degree in Arts
14	M	Val di Sole	Tour operator / Football coach	33	University degree in Tourism
15	M	Valli del Leno	Farmer / Researcher	30	University degree in Agronomy
16	F	Val di Sole	Graphic designer / Ceramist	34	Academy of Fine Arts
17	M	Haute-Alpes	Refuge warden / Mountain guide	35	University degree in Engineering
18	M	Val d’Isère	Mountain guide / Employee	34	Diploma of Mountain guide
19	M	Val d’Isère	Mountain guide / Wood artist	37	Diploma of Mountain guide

In addition to the qualitative interviews, an online questionnaire (see the Appendix) was developed based on the same thematic areas—personal background, work activities, local context, and perceptions of multi-activity in rural areas. Designed to mirror the interviews, the questionnaire aimed to expand the sample and collect complementary data. It was distributed at the beginning of December 2024 through the contacts of the Local Youth Plans and remained open until December 11, 2024, when the final response was collected. However, with only 15 valid responses, the sample size was insufficient to provide broader, statistically representative insight into the phenomenon. As such, the questionnaire data served primarily as qualitative reinforcement and contextual enrichment of the themes emerging from the in-depth interviews, rather than as a standalone quantitative dataset.

3. Analysis

Among our interviewees, multi-activity takes many different forms: seasonal work combined with permanent contracts, hobbies turned into second jobs, family activities added to one's main job. This variety mirrors the conceptual ambiguity noted in the literature, where terms like *slash work*, *pluriactivity*, and *hybrid entrepreneurship* overlap (Campion et al., 2019; Soru & Zanni, 2020). The configurations we observed vividly illustrate the interplay between **push** and **pull** factors (Campion et al., 2019).

Some people teach and at the same time run a farm they have inherited; others work in a factory and help out in the fields; others alternate between working as a ski instructor in winter and in tourism in summer, or combine working as a holistic instructor with a hospitality project. Some work as educators in the summer, others coordinate sports associations, and others still conduct bands while teaching at school.

For many, multi-activity has been a feature of their lives for years, often since adolescence, as a cultural legacy of farming families where it has always been customary to do “something else” as well. Others have adopted it more recently, especially since the pandemic, when

some jobs came to a halt and it became necessary to diversify their income. Time management is dictated by the seasons: winter brings work on the slopes, summer brings agriculture or tourism; the mid-seasons are often devoted to second jobs or training.

3.1 Work experience and the configuration of multi-activity

Multi-activity among our informants emerges along a spectrum, ranging from compelled economic diversification to chosen, identity-driven professional plurality. At one end, multi-activity functions primarily as a response to financial necessity. For example, a factory worker and a farmer describe their main job as essential for survival: *"The company is my main job: it pays the bills. It's what puts bread on my table"* (Interview n.1). This reflects the "push" factors identified in the literature, where income supplementation is necessary for financial survival or to compensate for insufficient hours in a primary job (Eurofound, 2020; Unni, 1996).

Economic compulsion also intersects with sectoral precarity and shocks. A freelancer illustrates this edge of precarious multi-jobholding: *"When there is a financial emergency, supplementing your income means looking for other work. Sometimes it's work that doesn't interest me, but it's necessary"* (Interview n.5). Here, diversification is not voluntary but forced, highlighting the coping function of multi-activity.

Between necessity and choice lies multi-activity as a response to structural rhythms, particularly seasonality in tourism and agriculture (Robertson, 2006). Temporal constraints shape occupational patterns, creating what Eurofound (2020) calls the "portfolio" or heterogeneous jobs model. A tourism worker explains: *"Garda Trentino is the tourism promotion company for Garda and my Valley [...] I have always worked on weekends since I was the minimum age... during the summer seasons full-time"* (Interview n.4). Similarly, a ski instructor/mechanic recounts: *"I did three seasons... but I was looking for more financial stability. I decided to change to see if I could find a balance."* (Interview n.8). In these cases, work alternates to match seasonal demand, blending necessity with planning.

At the “pull” end of the spectrum, multi-activity becomes a deliberate strategy for personal fulfilment, skill development, and territorial engagement. A teacher-beekeeper emphasises the psychological benefits of secondary work: “*When the bell rings, school is over. Farming allows me to switch off”* (Interview n.13). Another interviewee frames multi-activity as both practical and aspirational: *“Multi-activity, in addition to being a strategy for income integration, is an opportunity both to be able to continue studying and to be able to bring an input to your area that you would not otherwise see arrive [...]”* (Interview n.7). This reflects the intentionality described in portfolio careerism literature, where multiple roles support personal and professional growth (Caza et al., 2018; Kawakami, 2019).

The narratives of French alpine guides vividly illustrate this evolution from necessity to chosen plurality. One guide carefully structures seasonal labour*: “I prefer to divide them and do only in the winter the refuge and only in the summer the mountain.”* (Interview n.17). Another combines guiding with advocacy: *“I am independent, a self-employed worker, and I work as a guide, then as an employee I do office work for an association that deals with mountain education. I try to lobby, that is, I try to convince the people who contact the association to come and visit our mountains. I am a mountain leader and I have a State diploma, my sector is educational and touristic”* (Interview n.18). A third recounts a journey beginning with economic disruption but culminating in a resilient, identity-driven portfolio: *“I am a mountain leader and a woodworker and neither of the two jobs is salaried, I am completely self-employed. I have been doing these two jobs together for 5 years, before I only did the mountain leader, I've been doing it since I was 16. I started the second job because of the COVID closure”* (Interview n.19). These stories reflect hybrid entrepreneurship, where diversification becomes a tool to sustain passion-driven, territory-rooted work (Thorgren et al., 2016).

What emerges from our interviewees’ accounts confirms that multi-activity is far from a uniform practice. It spans a continuum – from push-driven strategies aimed at economic survival, through coping mechanisms responding to structural and seasonal constraints, to pull-driven pursuits of professional plurality and personal fulfilment. Multi-activity is at once a legacy

rooted in rural family economies, a pragmatic response to precarity, and a proactive strategy for constructing meaningful and resilient livelihoods in mountain contexts. This complexity highlights its dual role as both an individual livelihood tactic and a structural feature of the "new rurality" (Kasimis & Papadopoulos, 2013), mediating the balance between what sustains life and what enriches it.

3.2 Motivations and choices

The motivations that lead our interviewees to combine multiple jobs are complex, encompassing economic necessity, the search for stability, personal passion, and a desire for meaningful engagement. Many interviewees openly describe how their choices were initially dictated by financial constraints – high rents, mortgages, living costs, unexpected expenses, and the inherent precarity of seasonal sectors. For some, especially younger workers, multi-activity simply allows them to "survive" in tourist valleys, where salaries often do not suffice for independent living.

At the same time, a strong component of personal meaning emerges. The secondary job often represents the part of life that is "nourishing," offering satisfaction, self-expression, and alignment with personal values. Some train children out of belief in educational growth, others write or run farms out of passion for culture or the land, and some organise cultural events as alternatives to a tourist-centred monoculture. As one interviewee observes: *"I don't do it for the money. It's a conscious choice linked to my vocation, to what nourishes me."* (Interview n.10). Another emphasises the balance that dual roles provide: *"Having a main job and a passion is essential for me, otherwise I would explode. Having two jobs allows you to support yourself and at the same time cultivate what completes you as a person: it keeps you balanced between survival and your soul."* (Interview n.14).

Practical necessity and personal fulfilment often coexist. One participant notes: *"Having two jobs is a bit of both: choice and necessity. As my work as a trainer varies greatly throughout the year, I need a steady income for rent and mortgage payments."* (Interview n.2). Similarly,

a teacher highlights the interplay between economic constraints and passion: *“Some choices are dictated by the fact that my teaching salary arrives on the 27th of the month. But I also have my other passion.”* (Interview n.13). Another explains how secondary work allows them to preserve well-being in their primary role: *“In my opinion, the agricultural part helps me to keep going with the school part, because otherwise, as soon as you finish your work, I see colleagues who maybe go home and take their work problems home with them, and I think that wears you down in the long run.”* (Interview n.13). For others, financial support comes from alternative sources: *“I can honestly say that my main job is that of director. But financially, no. What allows me to live more or less peacefully is teaching. That's why it came about.”* (Interview n.3).

The interviewees’ accounts also reveal the influence of family and cultural legacies. Many describe a strong ethic of hard work and personal sacrifice passed down through generations: *“The thing that scares me most is overload. It scares me most because, for example, in my culture, a good person is considered to be someone who works hard, so it's almost a legacy.”* (Interview n.10). Others actively resist these norms, forging alternative paths*: “I never wanted to work in advertising, for instance. So I made a very specific choice. I always wanted to work for small associations dealing with culture or social issues.”* (Interview n.5). Social networks further shape career trajectories: *“The moment I was starting with graphics... they [friends/family] encouraged me, and so I took the leap.”* (Interview n.16).

Economic reasoning remains central even in intentionally chosen paths. One interviewee recalls a career shift prompted by financial calculations*: “It was a conscious choice because for the first four years I worked as a ski instructor, where I had a VAT number... looking at the taxes and doing the math, I realised it was no longer convenient for me.”* (Interview n.8). Another emphasises conscious decision-making in managing multiple jobs: *“It is still a conscious choice. I know that I could choose differently. But right now, maintaining two jobs is in fact a choice.”* (Interview n.10).

For the French interviewees, lifestyle considerations and proximity to the mountains are key motivators. One notes the practical limitations of dual work: *“Economical, maybe it's less because it's the beginning. So the both jobs are quite similar economically. But for the moment it's not enough to live one year. Because two months in the summer and three in the winter is not enough. So I need, for the moment, some help... social aid.”* (Interview n.17). Others emphasise passion and intentional lifestyle choices: *“It was a life choice, I think this is the best thing for me, for the quality of life I decided to do these two jobs and to live near the mountains for this reason.”* (Interview n.18*); “I am here out of passion, I do these two jobs out of passion, I chose to live at 1000 meters and do these activities. I have the possibility to choose, and working outdoors is my primary choice.”* (Interview n.19).

In summary, the motivations for multi-activity rarely fall into purely economic or purely personal categories. They exist in a dynamic interplay of necessity, vocation, cultural inheritance, lifestyle preference, and conscious choice. Multi-activity functions simultaneously as a strategy for financial stability, a pathway for personal fulfilment, and a deliberate approach to living meaningfully and in place-based alignment with the mountains. This complex constellation underscores MJH as both a structural adaptation to precarious markets and sectors, and an expression of individual agency, identity, and values.

3.3 The role of the territory and rural life

The rural and mountain context profoundly shapes both the opportunities and motivations for multi-activity. Natural resources – woods, meadows, trails, and mountain landscapes – serve as workplaces for some (e.g., dog training, agriculture, sports activities) and as spaces of emotional regeneration for others. For many interviewees, nature is a primary reason for staying: it offers tranquillity, proximity to green spaces, and a sense of belonging within small communities. One participant reflects*: “I was used to leaving the house with the dogs and finding myself in the forest after a 5-minute walk. We really miss having the forest close to home. That's why neither of us wants to move away from the village.”* (Interview n.2). Another

underscores the strength of place attachment over urban opportunities*: "I love my valley. I've had job offers in the city, but I wouldn't trade my place for an urban setting."* (Interview n.6). The mountains are experienced as both nourishing and demanding: *"Being in a natural environment nourishes me: I would find it very difficult to live in a city all year round. It's a privilege. But there are also inconveniences: it's difficult to access activities, friendships and relationships. Nature here is radical, and in high season the valley becomes almost like Milan. Two opposite poles coexisting."* (Interview n.10).

At the same time, the rural setting imposes significant challenges. Extreme seasonality, distance from services, limited access to skilled professionals, and inflated housing costs in tourist areas often push younger people toward emigration. Multi-activity, however, enables many to remain, combining stable work with activities rooted in the territory. The natural environment itself becomes a productive resource, shaping work routines and job content: *"My job here is different from that of an instructor in Trento. I make extensive use of the woods, the countryside, the open meadows and the mountain trails. Natural resources are part of my job."* (Interview n.2). Adapting to these environmental constraints is essential: *"In the mountains, you have to manage everything: the weather changes in an instant and affects your mood and activities."* (Interview n.8).

Despite structural challenges, the perceived quality of life remains a decisive factor in the decision to stay: *"I could never live anywhere that wasn't in the mountains. The quality of life here is better, despite the limited services."* (Interview n.4); *"It's challenging to travel to the markets, but living here is more important to me."* (Interview n.16). The territory is seen as enabling meaningful and satisfying work*: "The territory I chose allows me to work. To maintain jobs and to have jobs that give me satisfaction in doing them."* (Interview n.5). Moreover, the rural context influences mindset and daily activities, instilling a mentality that encourages commitment to work and community*: "Living here influences [me] because you are born with a mentality that is, well, not necessarily about doing certain jobs, but certainly about experiencing the rurality of the countryside."* (Interview n.1).

For those wishing to remain in rural areas, opportunities are present but often require motivation and initiative: *"The opportunities are for those who, perhaps, have a great desire to stay in a territory like this."* (Interview n.11). Social networks and community engagement further enhance the experience of rural life, offering support, professional connections, and inspiration*: "Being able to see people who are dedicated to the same areas, who put energy into the things I believe in, helps me understand that perhaps there is hope of changing something."* (Interview n.7).

The French interviewees similarly emphasise that rural life enables multi-activity while providing lifestyle benefits. One guide highlights the social and dynamic aspects of working in the territory*: "The first thing is meeting people and the social part of the job. And after, maybe being outside, moving, changing location, and meeting people – doing and socialising. That's why I do these jobs and that's what I liked in my past job. [...] I don't see rural area as a negative point because it's tourism and people that make me work; they move to me. So for the moment there's no negative point!"* (Interview n.17). Another presents a more nuanced perspective, noting that rural living influences daily life but was not decisive in choosing their jobs*: "Living in a rural area certainly influences, but it is not decisive. For both of my jobs I could be anywhere, especially for the second one; all I need is a place where there is abandoned wood that I can take, but my jobs do not determine the fact that I chose to live here, in this rural area."* (Interview n.19).

In conclusion, the territory is a central actor in mountain multi-activity. It provides resources, shapes work routines, enables meaningful engagement, and fosters community ties, while also imposing constraints such as seasonality, isolation, and limited local markets. Multi-activity emerges as the strategic interface through which individuals navigate these opportunities and challenges, using diversification to harness the assets of the territory while mitigating its limitations, and supporting both personal well-being and the resilience of rural communities.

3.4 Social and relational dimensions

Family and social networks play a complex and ambivalent role in multi-activity in mountain areas. On one hand, they provide crucial practical support: inherited houses reduce living costs, family land sustains agricultural activity, and local connections facilitate employment, projects, and collaborations with associations, local councils, and cultural clubs. Participation in sports, cultural, or musical associations further sustains the community fabric while offering spaces for personal expression.

At the same time, multi-activity often erodes social life. Interviewees describe constant time pressure, fatigue, and difficulty maintaining friendships or stable relationships. Some rarely see friends or family, or only on weekends, reflecting the persistent negotiation required to manage overlapping commitments*: "Since I started working two jobs, let's say I've had to cut back everywhere. I already had few friends because I'm very selective when it comes to friendships, and there are friends I haven't seen for six or seven months. I don't have time, I simply don't have the time to call my parents in the evening to find out how they are."* (Interview n.2); *"Sometimes it affects your family life: you leave in the morning, you come home in the evening, you don't have time to share." (Interview n.9); "If you don't know how to set boundaries, overload is just around the corner. You have to constantly negotiate work, friends and family."* (Interview n.5).

The social cost of multi-activity extends to personal pursuits: *"If you are not a sports fanatic, all those activities that come after work, after family, after social relationships, etcetera, you start eliminating them."* (Interview n.5). These accounts highlight the risk of social isolation, showing that strategies for economic resilience can come at the expense of relational and personal well-being.

Family also shapes career trajectories in subtle but significant ways. For some, perceived responsibilities or internalised expectations limit exploration: *"I had a kind of perception of a responsibility... this held me back from making choices that perhaps now would have*

catapulted me into an artistic world." (Interview n.7). Others point to the influence of broader cultural norms*: "The typical family culture of the valley is very focused on work, on complaining little, on making one's time fruitful."* (Interview n.11). Such values can validate a multi-active lifestyle while simultaneously normalising overwork.

Community dynamics further mediate opportunities and constraints. In positive cases, small communities foster trust and collaboration*: "Being small communities, of course things are known... the more my group of students grows, the more all the new students who join confirm to me that the group and the people in it are truly good people."* (Interview n.6). Yet insularity can also hinder broader cultural and social initiatives: *"There is a lot of individualism, a great deal... if there were more collaboration, more dedication towards culture in general, it would be much easier."* (Interview n.1).

French interviewees, often amenity migrants or lifestyle seekers, report different social dynamics. Pursuing passion-driven work in rural areas can entail separation from urban-based family or partners, generating relational strain: *"No one... it's quite it's quite hard actually to live in mountain area because my family live in city areas and even my girlfriend, we nowadays we don't live together full time because she can't she can't live in the winter in a mountain area and and so it's quite difficult yeah so I don't know if in the future I will still live there but but I try."* (Interview n.17). Conversely, some couples share the anti-urban lifestyle choice, turning social support into a shared project: *"We live here now, but we want to move together to another region, the Ardeche; we decided it together, we always want to stay away from the city, always go to a rural place. We can afford it because we are looking for another way of life."* (Interview n.19). Others credit family encouragement for enabling migration to pursue a passion, even if it means reduced proximity*: "I couldn't do this job, the one I liked, in the place where I lived, where I was born. My family pushed me to come here, they didn't influence me to stay, they didn't ask me to stay. The real choice was determined by the passion for the mountain; my family indulged me."* (Interview n.18).

In sum, the social and relational dimensions of multi-activity are characterised by ambivalence. Networks and family provide essential support, guidance, and cultural validation, yet they are often the first to be strained by the demands of multiple roles. For locals, family and community serve as inherited anchors, sometimes constraining, sometimes enabling. For newcomers, these ties are chosen but distant, requiring negotiation, sacrifice, and adaptation. This paradox underscores that the sustainability of multi-activity as a livelihood strategy is inseparable from the resilience, flexibility, and health of the social environment in which it is embedded.

3.5 Digitalisation and new opportunities

Digital technology plays a significant but uneven role in enabling multi-activity in mountain areas. For some, particularly in education, culture, and creative professions, digital tools are central to daily routines, supporting course management, bookings, promotion, and networking beyond the valley. However, this potential is tempered by infrastructural and cultural limits – unstable connections, limited digital literacy, ineffective social media outreach, and the saturation or rejection of online communication practices. In this sense, digitalisation can mitigate geographical isolation, but it does not fully compensate for structural gaps.

Many interviewees underscore how digitalisation facilitates the practical management of multiple roles. A mountain guide and student notes: *“Digitalisation is very important right now... if I had to perform all the jobs I do in person in Val di Fassa, I wouldn't manage it.”* (Interview n.7). For others, it streamlines administrative tasks, safeguarding personal time and resources: *“Digitalisation is certainly an opportunity... if before I had to do a membership enrolment on paper and take it to Trento, now I scan it, send it, and it's done.”* (Interview n.9). Beyond efficiency, digital tools also expand professional networks. A graphic designer explains: *“Graphics is practically everything. Many of the clients I follow, I follow them on the social media side... twenty years ago, this kind of thing wasn't so possible.”* (Interview n.16). This illustrates how digitalisation enables rural professionals to access broader markets and

maintain connections that would otherwise be geographically constrained (Townsend et al., 2017).

At the same time, the adoption of digital tools is selective and strategic. Some actively limit technology to preserve personal and rural lifestyles. A teacher and farmer asserts: *"I use digital technology at school; in the countryside, I try to keep it as far away as possible."* (Interview n.13). Similarly, digital promotion often requires a strong physical presence: *"For martial arts, I first had to make people understand what we do: digital technology helps, but you also need a strong presence in the area."* (Interview n.6). Critiques of digitalisation also highlight its tension with the "slow living" ideal. As one ceramist and designer observes: *"There are a number of profiles that talk about slow living in the mountains. But in reality, we are constantly on our phones, for better or for worse."* (Interview n.16). Another concern is the social impact of technology, particularly its potential to erode traditional community spaces and intensify isolation: *"Digitalisation has led to the disappearance of those places that were once for play, for gathering... cases of social isolation are increasing."* (Interview n.7).

The French interviewees illustrate a spectrum of digital dependency tied closely to job type. For alpine guides, digital tools are essential for communication, bookings, and bureaucratic work: *"The digitalisation, you know... it's quite useful for the communication. And for the winter, the platform where you can book... even in mountain areas, digitalisation is quite... you can't do without."* (Interview n.17). Others adopt a hybrid approach: digital tools are crucial for secondary office work but less so for guiding, which relies on reputation and direct relationships: *"For my activity, digitalisation is essential, truly important. If I couldn't telework for my second activity, I wouldn't have a salary... I should use it as a guide too, but in this case, I use it very little; I have loyal clients who don't look for me on the internet."* (Interview n.18). At the other extreme, a guide and woodworker maintains minimal digital engagement, relying instead on physical visibility and word-of-mouth networks: *"I don't use the PC and internet much to get known; those who look for me find me. I only use it to do the invoices and keep*

the balance sheet... For the artist activity, I don't need it at all... I don't need the digital [world] but the people who see me and talk to me." (Interview n.19).

These experiences show that digitalisation is neither a universal necessity nor uniformly adopted. Its benefits – administrative efficiency, market expansion, and professional networking – are counterbalanced by challenges of social alienation, cultural contradiction, and the erosion of slower, place-based rhythms: "*There are also negative impacts of digitalisation: while it helps, it can also cause alienation, especially in contexts where face-to-face interactions are already limited. This concerns some of the interviewees who use it but would like to limit the time dedicated to technology, preserving social interactions and traditional practices."* (Interview n.16). In mountain multi-activity, digital tools are strategically appropriated, resisted, or compartmentalised according to the nature of work, personal philosophy, and the embeddedness of local networks.

In conclusion, digitalisation in mountain regions is a highly contextual and differentiated enabler. It can support complex, multi-role livelihoods, but it also introduces pressures and cultural trade-offs. Its uneven adoption underscores the need for nuanced research into how technological tools shape the practices, opportunities, and limitations of pluriactive life in rural and peripheral territories.

3.6 Resilience and future prospects

Across the interviews, multi-activity is widely seen as a driver of individual and territorial resilience. Respondents emphasise that diversification injects cultural vitality, sustains agricultural and craft traditions, and opens opportunities for younger generations. Some explicitly frame their work as a strategy to keep valleys alive, challenging dominant tourist logics through events, services and cultural initiatives. As one interviewee states, *"We need to break away from 'we've always done it this way'. We need cultural vitality, otherwise people will leave."* (Interview n.3). Others describe their homes or projects as forms of resistance,

offering alternatives to mass tourism: *"If it were only for tourism, I think we would have given up on the project much earlier."* (Interview n.10).

Introducing new practices, however, requires substantial territorial education. Novel ideas do not circulate automatically in small communities: *"People don't know and don't understand… so first we have to make people understand what we do."* (Interview n.6). The issue is not only economic but also cultural and infrastructural, with innovation often depending on long-term engagement and collective learning.

Yet, the respondents also identify major risks: physical and mental overload, difficulties in reconciling life and work, precarious contracts, social isolation and dependence on seasonal income. Several warn that, if unregulated, multi-activity may become a form of self-exploitation. One interviewee recalls that diversification is often a response to financial necessity: *"When there was a moment of liquidity… the income supplement was to look for something else."* (Interview n.5).

Future aspirations illustrate very different trajectories. Some hope eventually to live from a single passion, while others consider moving elsewhere for better social policies. Others are planning new businesses in the valley – dog boarding, cultural events, hospitality – to broaden the local economy and experiment with alternative models of mountain development. One interviewee notes: *"I diversify to survive and to study… then maybe I'll go elsewhere."* (Interview n.12). Others highlight structural limits: *"The opportunities are many… but not all of these opportunities have been seized."* (Interview n.14). From this perspective, depopulation is not caused by multi-activity itself but by broader issues such as housing and overtourism: *"It is overtourism that drives people out."* (Interview n.9).

Personal fulfilment also plays a decisive role in remaining. Several respondents emphasise the need for meaning in work: *"You struggle to realise yourself with work alone."* (Interview n.14). Institutional flexibility (for example, reduced working hours) enables some to stay: *"I had the opportunity to request a reduction of hours from my standard job."* (Interview n.6). Yet

making a single vocation economically viable remains difficult: *"Thinking of having to work only as a director and having a family is difficult."* (Interview n.3).

The French interviews reinforce the idea that multi-activity is crucial for the future of mountain regions, particularly because winter tourism alone cannot sustain local economies. Respondents call for diversified, year-round tourism: *"I hope the skiing resort will… base their activity not only on the ski but even in the summer."* (Interview n.17). Multi-activity is considered indispensable both financially and personally: *"The sole activity of guiding is impossible… I will continue to do multiple jobs."* (Interview n.18).

Moreover, French guides highlight a further dimension: multi-activity enables environmental engagement. By combining jobs, they can contribute to local associations and environmental stewardship: *"I can be involved in environmental volunteering because I have these two jobs… this creates resources for the territory too."* (Interview n.19).

Taken together, multi-activity appears as both engine and burden: a crucial means of sustaining mountain regions, but also a demanding personal strategy that risks burnout and precariousness. Its long-term potential depends on whether it becomes *collectively supported* – through policies, infrastructures and community initiatives – rather than remaining an individual response to structural fragilities.

4. Conclusions and policy recommendations

This analysis demonstrates that multi-activity and multiple job holding (MJH) are increasingly central to the resilience of rural and mountain areas. By enabling individuals, particularly young people, to combine diverse professional roles, multi-activity supports economic diversification and reduces vulnerability to sector-specific shocks, whether driven by climate variability, agricultural price volatility, or fluctuations in tourism demand. As seen earlier in this report, MJH also reflects the emergence of new sectors and remote work opportunities, allowing rural residents to participate in broader labour markets while remaining embedded in their

communities. At the same time, our empirical findings highlight how MJH also enables many young people to remain in rural areas and construct place-based livelihoods aligned with personal values and territorial attachment.

Multi-activity also fosters local innovation and social vitality. Young people often blend traditional land-based practices with digital competencies, experiential tourism, or value-added production, thereby creating new market niches and reinforcing community cohesion. Interviewees described such combinations not only as economic strategies but also as ways to contribute culturally, environmentally, and socially to the vitality of their valleys. These dynamics contribute to both economic adaptability and the preservation of landscapes, biodiversity, and cultural heritage, positioning multi-activity as a key driver of sustainable rural development.

However, the phenomenon also presents important challenges. Multi-activity and MJH can signal structural fragilities, including poor working conditions, inadequate wages, and the scarcity of stable, full-time employment. In such contexts, individuals may be compelled to take on additional jobs out of necessity rather than choice, which can result in work overload, administrative complexity, and limited opportunities for professional specialisation. Our interviews also underline the relational and emotional risks, including fatigue, reduced social life, and difficulty in reconciling work and personal well-being. Without appropriate support, the pressures associated with juggling multiple roles may undermine workers' well-being and the long-term viability of rural communities.

The questionnaire results, though limited in scale, reinforce these qualitative findings and offer additional nuance. The respondents, predominantly young, well-educated residents, confirmed that multi-activity is a long-term strategy driven by both economic necessity and a conscious choice to pursue a rural lifestyle. Their perceptions strongly validate its role in fostering social cohesion and innovation, which they rated as the most significant contributions to combating depopulation. However, they also overwhelmingly identified work overload and

burnout as the primary risk, underscoring the urgent need for policies that address well-being and work-life balance. Notably, open feedback highlighted specific material barriers such as access to affordable housing and land—a concrete policy priority that emerged directly from the survey data.

For these reasons, a first policy priority should be to establish a robust understanding of the nature, drivers, and distribution of MJH through comprehensive mapping using both quantitative and qualitative tools. Such monitoring should identify how widespread the phenomenon is, which sectors and jobs are most frequently combined, the quality of the employment involved, and whether multi-activity is driven by aspiration, opportunity, or financial necessity. Building on this foundation, policy should address both faces of MJH: strengthening social protections where multi-activity functions as a survival strategy, and fostering the educational, infrastructural, and economic conditions that allow it to become a source of empowerment, enrichment, and territorial resilience.

Investments in education and skills development in rural and peripheral areas are essential, as higher qualifications improve young workers' chances of accessing good-quality employment within diversified career paths. Similarly, improving rural infrastructure, including transport, mobility solutions, and high-speed broadband, is crucial to enabling access to emerging work opportunities without excessive time or financial costs. Crucially, as voiced by respondents, policies must also address housing affordability and access to land to enable young people and multi-active workers to establish roots in rural areas. At the same time, measures to ensure fair wages, decent working conditions, and safe working hours are vital to protect those pushed into MJH by economic hardship, including full alignment with European labour standards such as the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Working Time Directive. Digital inclusion and support for telework are equally relevant, given the uneven but growing role played by digitalisation in enabling multiple job holding.

Collectively, these measures can transform multi-activity from a precarious coping mechanism into a sustainable development strategy that enhances rural resilience, retains young talent, and supports vibrant, future-oriented mountain communities. More broadly, supporting multi-activity means recognising it not only as a response to structural change but also as a driver of new, place-based models of rural development grounded in diversification, community engagement, and ecological transition.

4.1 Research gaps and new directions

The insights emerging from this study suggest that multi-activity in mountain areas is closely intertwined with social and cultural transformations. Rather than being limited to an economic adjustment, it appears as a dynamic configuration of livelihoods through which young people negotiate staying, belonging, and professional development in territories that are both attractive and fragile. These practices broaden the repertoire of what counts as viable work in the mountains, often linking professional identity with community involvement, environmental commitments, and the desire to contribute to local futures, while also exposing individuals to uneven forms of precarity, work overload, and social strain.

As an exploratory and qualitative study, however, this research has certain limitations. The interviews provide rich, situated narratives, but they reflect a relatively small sample concentrated in specific Alpine contexts, and therefore cannot be considered representative of all rural multi-active workers. Additionally, seasonal dynamics and ongoing digital transformations are rapidly evolving, indicating the need for longitudinal and comparative studies to capture changes over time. These constraints mean that the findings should be interpreted as indicative rather than definitive.

Future research could address the differences between new rural residents and lifelong inhabitants, exploring how their diverse backgrounds, motivations, and forms of engagement with multiple job holding shape rural development. Moving beyond the traditional focus on agricultural pluriactivity, further studies should examine hybrid professions, cultural and

creative work, platform labour, and digitally enabled entrepreneurship, all increasingly present in marginalised areas. Comparative and longitudinal perspectives would help clarify how such trajectories evolve and under which conditions multi-activity supports not only individual livelihoods but also the emergence of more resilient and forward-looking mountain regions.

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APPENDIX

Traccia intervista

1. Introduzione e contesto personale

(per rompere il ghiaccio e far emergere la dimensione emotiva e motivazionale)

- ✓ Quanti anni hai?
- ✓ Dove vivi?
- ✓ Quali e quanti lavori fai?

2. Esperienze lavorative e configurazione della multiattività

Ti abbiamo contattato perché siamo interessati al tema della multiattività.

- Mi descrivi i tuoi lavori attuali?
  - In quali settori operi principalmente? (agricolo, turistico, culturale/creativo, altri)
  - Da quanto tempo fai più di un lavoro?
  - È un'attività simultanea (più lavori insieme) o stagionale/alternata nel tempo?
  - Ci sono stagioni più intense o periodi più tranquilli?
- C'è un lavoro che consideri "principale"?
  - In che senso: per reddito, per passione o per identità professionale?
- Mi racconti del percorso lavorativo… diciamo da dopo le scuole superiori?
  - Qual'è il tuo titolo di studio?
  - Da quanto abiti qui? Ti consideri residente stabile o ti sposti spesso?
  - Cosa ti ha portato a vivere (o tornare a vivere) in quest'area?
- È stata una scelta, una necessità, un ritorno, una ricerca di qualità della vita?
- Come descriveresti una giornata tipo?
  - far emergere il puzzle che costruisce la giornata, tra conciliazione lavoro e impegni familiari o socio-culturali

3. Motivazioni e scelte

- Come sei arrivato/a a combinare queste diverse attività?
  - È stata una scelta consapevole o una risposta a una necessità economica?
  - Ti senti più "imprenditore/a di te stesso/a" o "costretto/a a diversificare"?
- La multiattività è per te una strategia di integrazione del reddito o di crescita professionale/creativa?
  - Hai avuto modelli o esempi che ti hanno ispirato?
- Cos'è per te un buon lavoro?

4. Il ruolo del territorio e il vivere rurale

- In che modo il vivere in un'area rurale (descrivere: fondo valle, centro turistico, alta valle) influenza le tue attività?

- Pensi che la multiattività ti permetta di restare qui?
- Oppure è il vivere qui che ti spinge a fare più lavori?
- Quanto contano le risorse locali (scuola, doposcuola, servizi di trasporto pubblico o condivisi… natura…) per la multiattività?

5. Dimensioni sociali e relazionali

- Quanto la tua rete sociale o familiare ha inciso sulle tue scelte lavorative?
- Hai collaborazioni o partecipi ad associazioni locali?

6. Digitalizzazione e nuove opportunità

- Che ruolo ha la digitalizzazione nel tuo lavoro e nella possibilità di fare più attività?
- Ti ha aiutato ad ampliare le reti, promuovere servizi, lavorare a distanza?
- Nei contesti rurali, quali sono i limiti e le opportunità del digitale? (aiuta la resilienza, lo sviluppo dei contesti rurali)

7. Resilienza e prospettive future

- Secondo te, la multiattività contribuisce a combattere l'abbandono delle aree rurali?
- In che modo? (es. diversificazione economica, vitalità culturale, innovazione)
- Vedi anche dei rischi? (es. precarietà, sovraccarico, gentrificazione)
- Come immagini il tuo futuro lavorativo qui?

8. Conclusione

- C'è qualcosa che non ti ho chiesto, ma che ritieni importante per capire cosa significa essere multiattivo/a in un contesto rurale oggi
- Quanto è diffuso ?
- Ci puoi indicare altri contatti per interviste?

Questionario sulla Multiattività in Contesto Rurale

SEZIONE 1 – Informazioni personali

Quanti anni hai?
Qual è il tuo genere?
☐ Maschile
☐ Femminile
☐ Altro / Preferisco non rispondere
Qual è il tuo titolo di studio?
☐ Nessun titolo/scuola elemetare
☐ Scuola media
☐ Diploma di scuola superiore
☐ Laurea triennale
☐ Laure magistrale o superiore
Dove vivi? (Comune) _____
La località dove vivi è:
☐ Alta valle
☐ Media valle
☐ Bassa valle
☐ Non rilevante
La località dove vivi è un centro turistico?
☐ SI
☐ NO
Da quanto tempo vivi qui?
☐ Meno di 1 anno
☐ Da 1 a 3 anni
☐ Da 3 a 5 anni
☐ Da 5 a 10 anni
☐ Più di 10 anni
☐ Da quando sono nato/a
Cosa ti ha portato a vivere (o restare a vivere) in quest'area?
(spuntare tutte le opzioni pertinenti)
☐ Scelta personale
☐ Necessità
☐ Ritorno alle origini
☐ Ricerca di qualità della vita
☐ Natura e paesaggio
☐ Altro: _____

SEZIONE 2 – Multiattività

Quali lavori svolgi attualmente?

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ Più di 2

Le tue attività sono

☐ Svolte in modo simultaneo

☐ Svolte in modo stagionale/alternato2

Da quanto svolgi più di un lavoro?

☐ Meno di 1 anno

☐ Da 1 a 3 anni

☐ Da 3 a 5 anni

☐ Da 5 a 10 anni

☐ Più di 10 anni

☐ Da sempre

Dei lavori che svolgi, ve ne è uno che consideri il principale?

☐ Sì

☐ No

Descrivi brevemente il lavoro 1 _____

Descrivi brevemente il lavoro 2 _____

Descrizione breve del lavoro 3 (e eventuale altri lavori) _____

Se hai indicato il lavoro 1 come principale, qual è la ragione?

☐ E' quello che mi assicura il maggiore reddito

☐ E' quello che faccio con maggior passione

☐ E' il lavoro che ho sempre desiderato e che esprime la mia identità

In quali settori si colloca il tuo lavoro primario?

☐ Agricolo

☐ Turistico

☐ Culturale/creativo

☐ Altro: _____

In quali settori si colloca il tuo lavoro secondario?

☐ Agricolo

☐ Turistico

☐ Culturale/creativo

☐ Altro: _____

Svolgere due o più lavori è stata:

☐ Una scelta consapevole

☐ Una necessità economica

☐ Entrambe

☐ Nessuna delle due

Quanto il vivere in un'area rurale influisce sulle tue attività?

☐ Poco

☐ Abbastanza

☐ Molto

Quanto contano le risorse locali del territorio (scuola, trasporti, natura, servizi condivisi…) nel sostenere la tua multiattività?

☐ Poco

☐ Abbastanza

☐ Molto

Quanto la tua rete sociale o familiare ha inciso sulle tue scelte lavorative?

☐ Poco

☐ Abbastanza

☐ Molto

Participi ad associazioni locali?

☐ Sì

☐ No

SEZIONE 3 – Ruolo della multiattività sulle proprie aspettative lavorative e per lo sviluppo rurale.

Secondo te, in che modo la multiattività può contribuire a contrastare l'abbandono delle aree rurali? (assegna un punteggio da 1 a 5)

☐☐☐☐☐ Diversificazione economica

☐☐☐☐☐ Attrazione dei giovani

☐☐☐☐☐ Rafforzamento delle relazioni sociali comunitarie

☐☐☐☐☐ Innovazione e sviluppo di nuovi settori

☐☐☐☐☐ Tutela del paesaggio

☐☐☐☐☐ Mantenimento delle tradizioni

☐☐☐☐☐ Vitalità culturale

Secondo te, quale è il rischio principale legato alla multiattività?

☐ Precarietà economica (bassi salari, lavoro instabile)

☐ Sovraccarico di lavoro e burnout

☐ Mancanza di specializzazione professionale

☐ Complessità burocratica/fiscale

☐ Isolamento / mancanza di tempo per relazioni sociali

Quale peso ha la digitalizzazione nel tuo lavoro e nella possibilità di svolgere più attività?

☐ Ridotto

☐ Importante

☐ Non so

Come immagini il tuo futuro lavorativo?

☐ Manterrò due o più lavori

☐ Passerò da due o più lavori ad una sola occupazione dipendente

☐ Passerò da due o più lavori ad una sola occupazione come lavoratore autonomo

☐ Non so

Dove immagini il tuo futuro lavorativo?

☐ Nel luogo in cui vivo ora

☐ In un altro contesto rurale della Provincia di Trento

☐ In un contesto urbano della Provincia di Trento (es. Trento e Rovereto)

☐ Fuori dalla Provincia di Trento

Grazie per aver risposto! Se hai qualche suggerimento o altre informazioni che vorrebbe condividere puoi riportarle nello spazio sottostante.

_____