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## THE STORY OF EMPTIED SPAIN IS THE STORY OF MY LIFE



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I was born in a village because there was a doctor and health care, I studied in a town because there was a school, I played in a town because there were children to play with. People were happy because there were people to talk and laugh with. Basic services were guaranteed and everybody shared spaces and moments, and of course, helped each other.

But life changed when people wanted to have more things, consume more and not settle for what they had. They wanted to study more, to have a better quality of life, to travel to other places and to live where there were more people, amenities, resources, facilities... Finally, social relations also changed.

Young people went away, population became older and the small towns were abandoned. Teachers, doctors, pharmacists retired and no one replaced them.



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We all left our village looking for a dream. We were told that life in the city was wonderful and we moved there to study and to get a job. Earning a living in villages and small towns was hard because occupations were changing.

Nowadays we want to recover part of that lost space and time and the political parties are promising different commitments.

If I want to return to my village now, I need to have good public services, I need school for my children, I need conciliation services, I need Internet, I need employment for myself and my children and I need public transportation.

In addition, it is necessary tax advantages so that more people can live in the village and this can grow, housing available for people with low income, especially young people. Economic activity needs to be promoted, especially the agri-food and tourism industry. Creating meeting spaces for activities and social relations, including bars, small shops and social centres are also important, as well as good roads. Facilitating the arrival of migrants to work in rural areas where their labour is needed has to be taken into account.

However, if there is not also a greater culture of living in the towns with higher economic investment and believing that this is possible, we will not achieve it.

There are many advantages: more quality of life, places to walk and trekking, less noise, cheaper living and better air quality.

Nevertheless, many towns in our region will not be able to survive in 20 years. It's too late for them.

Pablo Rodríguez Hoyos

Huerta del Rey. FeCEAV. Programa Municipal ALV.