Landscape management, environmental quality, and local development: a brief commentary

Ioannis Konaxis
Department of tourism studies, University of Piraeus, 80 Karaoli & Dimitriou, EL-18534 Piraeus, Greece (ikonaxis@unipi.gr)

Abstract

Local development is a multidimensional and complex process, essential for addressing territorial disparities and mitigating the distorting impacts of globalization. This article explores how local development goes beyond economic parameters, focusing on the growth of both tangible and intangible assets, such as infrastructure and cooperation networks, which contribute to the community's social capital. We analyze the intrinsic dynamics of local systems, emphasizing the crucial role of factors such as urban resilience, sectoral diversification, and the valorization of traditional landscapes as drivers of progress. We discuss the importance of integrated governance and multidimensional policies that overcome the limits of sectoral planning and the 'localism trap'. The article finally promotes a new culture of planning, public-private partnerships, and effective coordination of policies at all levels, while encouraging greater participation of local actors for development that considers both economic growth and qualitative and social aspects.

Keywords: local governance, spatial planning, urban growth, social dynamics, sustainability.

Introduction

Local development is a process of renewal, enhancement, and adaptation of a territory's or city's local resources (Accetturo & De Blasio 2012). It represents an alternative way of looking at the possibilities for evolution within social and economic systems, encompassing economy, society, culture, politics, and the environment. The term ‘local development’ is used to denote a wide variety of often contradictory positions, rich in theoretical and practical references (Cox & Mair 1988). It stands as one of the possible responses to the distorting impacts of globalization on the environment and the global population. The term is associated with development processes that do not have economic dimensions as their sole objective, nor exclusively econometric values as reference parameters. Instead, it refers to the growth of local assets useful for improving the local context, such as infrastructure, and especially intangible assets, represented by networks of exchange and cooperation between individuals and institutional actors (Coffey & Polese 1985).

All of this is tied to positive values in the economy, the environment (and landscape), and for local societies, which are usually encompassed within the community's social capital (Van der Heide & Heijman 2013). Indeed, it is precisely through the capacity for collaboration and strategy that can be activated at the city level that opportunities for growth arising from globalization and local economic forces can be seized, thus beginning the path towards local development and progress (Cox 1995).

In other words, local development is a leap forward that allows us to understand the city's limitations, or rather, to realize what happens in a territory due to natural effects and what can result from actions aimed at enhancing a specific resource to improve it. This type of development involves actions to support economic development, which must be tied to the territory, possessing characteristics that distinguish them from those of global economies (Ramsay 1996). First, the activities involved are labor-intensive and capital-light. Second, they do not primarily depend on the control of financial structures and multinational corporations; they are linked to local communities and territories and cannot be relocated. Third, they are tied to the specific skills and knowledge of the territories. In particular, privileged economic sectors include: green economies (Loiseau et al. 2021).

The local system is also defined as an aggregate of subjects that, under certain circumstances, behave as a collective entity (Simon & Ando 1961). It is a whole with its own identity, which interacts with the outside, capable of reproducing itself over time. The local territorial system is a territorial area defined by the network of relationships among local actors within that specific geographic space and connected with networks of actors from the external environment or environments. It is defined as a local system that, stably coinciding with specific places, is characterized by the specific common

relationships that its constituent subjects maintain with a certain local environment or milieu (Torre & Traversac 2011). The interpretative model should compare the given territorial 'heritage' with the organization of the territory in political, economic, social, and service provision spheres, etc., starting from the identity of the past, but it is primarily defined by the system's organizational and self-reproduction capacity (Capello 2019).

However, this theoretical model is not without limitations and critical issues, forgetting that the local territorial system always operates within a broader context, and also regarding the necessary competencies and capacities of local actors to identify and analyze all territorial resources understood in a broad sense. Furthermore, difficulties in making collective territorial action concrete in terms of the synergy a territory can express, and the relationship with urban and territorial policies and environmental sustainability, are also linked to this process (Maillat 1998). These local actors can better understand, activate, modify, and manage local socioeconomic dynamics more effectively and durably than external interventions.

Therefore, a territory will be more competitive, even globally (Bowen, 2010), the more capable it is of identifying and pursuing its own development strategy that maximizes its local specificities as a whole, the so-called 'local milieu' (Lofland 2024). In an era characterized by globalization and urgent challenges such as climate change (Jakob 2022) and economic crises, the pursuit of sustainable and inclusive progress is more crucial than ever. This contribution delves into the heart of a dynamic process of renewal and resource valorization that goes far beyond mere economic growth (Wu et al. 2020). In this perspective, we will explore how the interweaving of economy, society, culture, politics, and environment can generate unique opportunities, and how a territory's ability to build collaboration networks (Hariram et al. 2023) and targeted strategies is key to seizing challenges and transforming them into drivers of growth. We will finally decipher the facets of this approach, which considers the limits and potentials of every city and community (Chen et al. 2020), seeking to understand how intangible resources (Acri et al. 2024) – such as exchange networks and social capital – are just as vital as infrastructure (Shiell et al. 2020).

Local Development: From Theory to Practice

Recent empirical literature highlights how networks of relationships and cooperation among local actors and international policies are fundamental for initiating a leap towards local development. Empirical literature emphasizes the importance of measurement for evaluation purposes, enabling the formulation of judgments that drive improvement actions. Therefore, discussing improvement, its measures, and its evaluation means questioning the true aims and results of the process (Gimbert et al. 2010). Development must consider not only quantitative results but also qualitative ones, which complicate measurement and analysis. However, there are also aspects not measurable by traditional methods, such as those derived from the intensity of dialogue among institutional, economic, and social actors in a territory, hence their ability to provide positive collective responses to local problems. Nonetheless, financial data must also be considered; they help understand whether the capital invested in a development project has begun to yield results. One must ascertain whether what was conceived and implemented has had a positive economic and social impact, meaning it has improved something and worked (Sachs 2015).

The fact remains that local development requires financial resources, and their availability, allocation, and utilization are part of the overall process framework. The participation of social capital (Sabet & Khaksar 2024) in local development addresses various needs or utilities: an instrumental utility because, as local actors, they know the context in which they operate and thus, by providing broader information, allow for more elements to define the most effective strategy; moreover, their direct participation in defining local needs, through mediation and negotiation among the various interests they represent, helps build consensus and preemptively reduce conflicts, legitimizing the adopted strategy (Ansari et al. 2012). They also provide a constructive utility given that all local actors, not just institutions, represent diverse interests. By highlighting autonomous positions in defining priorities, intervention strategies, and control instruments, local actors become active participants in development processes, ensuring democratic participation. Finally, they provide a direct utility in that collaboration, collective learning, and participation allow for the strengthening of social capital; thus,

local actors are both a means and an objective for development. There is no single theoretical model for local development, but rather a set of models defined as orthodox with respect to economic theory. Neoclassical models focus on the functioning of the free market with assumptions of perfect mobility of capital and labor, implying that regional growth disparities can only be temporary (Ledwith 2011). In updated models, the technological factor is also considered, which introduces rent control, and the previous perfect mobility gives way to the concept of geographical differentiation and innovation. The empirical discussion developed in another school of thought centered on themes of flexible specialization, networks, trust, social capital, regional innovation systems, and sustainable development, allows linking local development with economic growth and infrastructural/technological advancements (Pike et al. 2016).

Following classic models such as that described by Hirschman (2014), local development is assumed to interact with the latent resources of the place. It has therefore been recognized, especially by some Anglo-Saxon studies, that local development lies in an uncomfortable boundary between theory and practice, as it requires the formulation of further development solutions in addition to the analysis of socioeconomic evolution. Therefore, it is clear that the measurement method cannot be singular but focuses on what one wishes to highlight and correct. Official statistics and socioeconomic indicators contribute, in this direction, to understanding whether the chosen development path is the right one. Evaluation in local development is a collective learning process, and the same cooperation allows for information exchange, joint planning, and progress monitoring (Parkhurstis 2014).

An important element to consider is that there is a direct relationship between process evaluation and outcome evaluation, but in territorial development processes, one should focus on both the process and the result. This means that reference must also be made to the local resources that allow programs to function, but field experience teaches us that perhaps the process has not guaranteed the use of the best resources by local institutions because it has often left local coalitions separate from networks and allowed for short-term choices. Therefore, there is a need for effective and functional coordination that does not solely focus on bureaucracy.

Envisioning the Intrinsic Dynamics of Local Systems

Cities grow through the agglomeration effects of economic factors and population dynamics (Park et al 2013). Therefore, their development depends on a combination of socioeconomic elements and resources. Furthermore, cities are not immune to the pressures of globalization, and the strategies they employ result from their unique economic, institutional, social, and political factors. Cities can experience crises, often coinciding with economic and social downturns, leading to a halt in local development (Kantor 2019). Their subsequent rebirth depends on a combination of factors and strategic actions that enable them to recover easily. One such system is the 'resilient' city (Acuti & Bellucci 2020) — a city capable of recovering from economic or other crises without severe damage, by connecting with other territories and engaging in exchanges of information and knowledge to improve itself (Vale 2014).

The resilient city is thus balanced, managing to sustain both industrial, agricultural, and tourism specialization and diversification within its boundaries, allowing for great sectoral variety. In contrast, there is the competitiveness established between cities, primarily those with a cluster-based structure, which tend to fossilize on a single type of economy. They strive to outperform and offer higher quality than other cities operating in the same sector (Turok 2012). This carries a serious risk: that of a potential and devastating economic crisis. As soon as specialized cities encounter any type of crisis, they will not be able to recover quickly without suffering severe damage or losses, as their economy cannot rely on other sectors.

In both cases, the territory plays a fundamental role. If it's too small, it's not suitable for a resilient city, which must necessarily consider its territory as the foundation for economic construction, taking into account its capacities and exploiting it respectfully (Zhikharevich et al. 2021). In this vein, urban recovery has stemmed from applying certain governance strategies and investment choices that combine concrete actions with visions for urban development (Stern et al. 2020). From this perspective, the strategic plan serves as a mobilization tool towards development goals which, in its initial phase, brought coherence to all undertaken investment actions (Ruddock & Ruddock 2022). This also enables the creation of a planning and investment space between public and private actors

within a territory (Challender & MacMillan 2019). To the already explained set of actions, numerous other programs for mobility reorganization, urban valorization, and urban regeneration should be added.

Traditional landscapes as a driver of economic growth

Development is linked to territories and landscapes. First, we should address internal areas (Domon 2011). This term refers to all those territories marginalized by industrial development, often neglecting these internal areas. Today, with the fading impetus of industrial development, some positive signs are emerging in these areas, although they are still very weak. Nevertheless, they deserve adequate economic, political, and regulatory support. Internal areas are strategic for local development because they possess the territorial heritage necessary for its activation (Punziano & Urso 2016). First, there is a unique and unrepeatable landscape where natural factors have been enriched and valorized by human effort, serving as historical and identity testimony. This constitutes the primary resource for innovative and alternative tourism offerings compared to traditional international destinations, whose attractiveness has, moreover, decreased.

Second, the reproducible environmental resources, widely present in these contexts, provide services to urban areas (water, alternative energy, waste disposal, food reserves) and contribute to their metabolism (Kisman & Tasar 2014). These areas, however, are also characterized by the presence of environmental problems related to hydrogeological instability, which today represent one of the emergencies associated with local warming (Merz et al 2011). Territorial governance instruments in Europe have sometimes demised internal areas, because they were considered residual in development processes. In recent decades, environmental and landscape problems have become fully evident: new environmental and landscape control instruments have been proposed, such as landscape plans, basin plans, park plans (Cutaia 2016), and Strategic Environmental Assessment (Therivel 2012). These have overlapped in the same areas without integrating or coordinating, but, crucially, they have generated administrative conflict and created procedural and bureaucratic complications. With the sole exception of Rural Development Programs (e.g. Van der Ploeg et al. 2017), which often operated by distributing funds, internal areas have been overlooked by national economic planning.

It follows that, to define objectives and adopt strategies, local development cannot be sectoral but must be linked to multidimensional, integrated, and intersectoral policies where the territory is a central element. In this way, the territory becomes a distinct active subject in development with its own heritage, values, and capital, and local development is the planning process that the territory identifies, assuming a role that is more active the greater and more varied its resources, territorial values, local actors, and their capacity for action and self-organization. From this perspective, local development policies sometimes constitute a form of support for economic development policies. These are policies primarily aimed at reconnecting the economic and market spheres with the political sphere oriented towards the production of local collective goods, accompanied by the theme of cooperation among development actors themselves (Kline & Moretti 2014).

For local development policies, the role of the European Community is very important, as it defines the rules of the European market to which national institutions must adhere when implementing their economic policies (Keohane & Hoffmann 2018). The European Union also implements policies to reduce regional disparities in terms of socioeconomic development through structural funding interventions directed at regions and regional territories. Regional development policies are called 'structural' because they involve the use of structural funds, i.e., the resources that the EU regularly allocates from its budget for regional rebalancing (Nicolosi & Mustert 2020). Much of the debate on the effectiveness of these policies has focused on their ability to reduce existing disparities (Cini & Borragán 2022). Numerous initiatives have sought, albeit in varying proportions and methods, to improve local labor market performance; to foster eco-compatible urbanization; to implement strategies against exclusion and discrimination; to promote tourism and cultural offerings; and to give more space to entrepreneurial activities, especially innovative ones (Panara 2016).

Landscapes and local development

Trying to put all theories into practice to create a program for good local development should not be complicated; however, there are hurdles to overcome. A new culture of planning is needed, meaning the ability to select priorities in public administration, especially at the local level, transforming political strategies and inter-sector policy integration into two priorities. (Dickeson 2010 & Peters 2015). Strategic plans cannot be the sole basis for all local development projects, even though it is quite difficult to conceive a development plan without integrating the environmental dimension (Ioppolo et al. 2016).

Therefore, this strategic plan must be accompanied by an evaluation system that also performs learning by monitoring functions and can quickly provide the necessary information and lessons for project improvement. Connected to innovation in public administration is the theme of a culture of planning. Furthermore, a stronger link between politics and policies is important, meaning a system capable of transforming the commitment of local politics concerning innovation and valorization into integrated public policies that connect local resources and capacities with others that are also focused on innovative actions (Poister 2010).

This implies a great balance between politics and administration to avoid excessive bureaucratization of actions within the same territory. Another important point is to find a strategy for financial resources that can include public-private partnerships aimed at investing in local collective goods, not only cultural ones but also those supporting the economy. Perhaps more work is needed to clarify the role of banking foundations in local development investments. Coordination of resources, accompanied by coordination on local development objectives, is necessary. Therefore, the organization of local and regional policy coordination is fundamental as an incentive for policy integration and for opening territories to global flows (Palaniswamy & Krishnan 2012).

Coordinated national policy would help avoid the 'localism trap', create interregional synergies in economic, transport, and infrastructural investments, and overcome the polarization of national development into the 'Southern question' versus the 'Northern question' (Pescosolido 2019). Another important task is to improve the attention of local actors through greater participation to guide them towards qualitative aspects of development, so as not to fall into traps dictated by exclusively economic growth objectives and short-term returns.

Finally, more research and studies should be conducted, and comparisons between local development experiences in Europe and worldwide should be broadened to enhance the capacity to understand innovative practices. The soundness of any theoretical model of territorial development is strongly affected by variables linked to local realities. The crisis that has impacted the whole of Europe, has caused the old continent to lose its distinctive features, receiving austerity and fiscal rigor policies as a response.

This has led to indiscriminate and linear cuts to public spending, drastic reductions in available resources, especially for economic and social policies which, instead, should have relaunched the economy and responded to the needs of workers and citizens, already heavily penalized by the consequences of the crisis (Walter, 2016). Such policies have not always proven functional, and therefore there is a need to give a new impetus to Europe in terms of institutions, guaranteeing greater integration and solidarity among Member States, and to the economy through a new investment and growth plan where labor and enterprise, on equal terms, can contribute to common development and progress. In this sense, the economic premises have progressively changed, and the development model must adhere to new local and global balances; this means being able to identify which consumption patterns, productions, territories, and strategies to consider and which interventions to implement.

In this regard, the new development policies and the new programming of development funds in Europe can represent a great opportunity, if supported by all Member States, for the entire system (Budzich & Szukala 2013). Despite the multiplicity of territories, and the historical, artistic, cultural, and environmental heritage, there is not enough time, social conditions, or economic resources for unlimited valorization, and politics must take responsibility for making the necessary and urgent strategic choices to respond to the needs of our continent. Where to find the resources for concrete economic policy is the problem of problems. The growth of priority sectors and segments to invest in, where to direct research and innovation, how and what to produce, how to harmonize the gap between

territory (valorizing local realities within a national policy perspective) and common goods (as a driver of development and a tool for social cohesion) remain debated topics for which there is no single solution. This is not enough at the local level, in light of the territorial development opportunities offered by the new community programming, so that when we talk about development, labor, and not just capital, is a determining and fundamental factor.

Concluding remarks

This contribution is positioned at the crossroads between theory and practice to offer an in-depth vision of local development, understood not only as an economic process, but as a complex interaction between subjects, resources and contexts. We will analyze the intrinsic challenges in translating theoretical models into concrete actions, from measuring results to promoting environmental awareness. From metropolitan dynamics to traditional landscapes, the contribution outlines a path to overcome the dichotomy between sectoral approaches and the need for integrated and multidimensional policies, proposing a new culture of programming that puts the well-being of the territory and its inhabitants at the center.

References

Accetturo, A., & De Blasio, G. (2012). Policies for local development: An evaluation of Italy's Patti Territoriali. Regional Science and Urban Economics, 42(1–2), 15–26.

Acri, M., Greffe, X., & Dobričić, S. (2024). Intangible matters: Cultural heritage as a driver for circular economy. In Adaptive reuse of cultural heritage: Circular business, financial and governance models (pp. 71–95). Springer International Publishing.

Acuti, D., & Bellucci, M. (2020). Resilient cities and regions: Planning, initiatives, and perspectives. Climate Action, 763–774.

Alacevich, M. (2016). Albert O. Hirschman and the rise and decline of development economics. In Research in the history of economic thought and methodology (pp. 13–39). Emerald Group Publishing.

Ansari, S., Munir, K., & Gregg, T. (2012). Impact at the "bottom of the pyramid": The role of social capital in capability development and community empowerment. Journal of Management Studies, 49(4), 813–842.

Biasi, R., Brunori, E., Ferrara, C., & Salvati, L. (2019). Assessing impacts of climate change on phenology and quality traits of Vitis vinifera L.: The contribution of local knowledge. Plants, 8(5), 121.

Bowen, S. (2010). Embedding local places in global spaces: Geographical indications as a territorial development strategy. Rural Sociology, 75(2), 209–243.

Budzich-Szukala, U. (2013). A new approach to local development in programming EU funds: Experience from the past and challenges for the future. New Paradigm in Action, 116–138.

Canfora, L., Salvati, L., Benedetti, A., & Francaviglia, R. (2017). Is soil microbial diversity affected by soil and groundwater salinity? Evidence from a coastal system in central Italy. Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, 189, 1–15.

Capello, R. (2019). Interpreting and understanding territorial identity. Regional Science Policy & Practice, 11(1), 141–158.

Challender, D. W. S., & MacMillan, D. C. (2019). Investigating the influence of non-state actors on amendments to the CITES appendices. Journal of International Wildlife Law & Policy, 22(2), 90–114.

Chen, Y., Zhu, M., Lu, J., Zhou, Q., & Ma, W. (2020). Evaluation of ecological city and analysis of obstacle factors under the background of high-quality development: Taking cities in the Yellow River Basin as examples. Ecological Indicators, 118, 106771.

Cini, M., & Borragán, N. P. S. (2022). European Union politics. Oxford University Press.

Coffey, W. J., & Polese, M. (1985). Local development: Conceptual bases and policy implications. Regional Studies, 19(2), 85–93.

Colantoni, A., Ferrara, C., Perini, L., & Salvati, L. (2015). Assessing trends in climate aridity and vulnerability to soil degradation in Italy. Ecological Indicators, 48, 599–604.

Coluzzi, R., Bianchini, L., Egidi, G., Cudlín, P., Imbrenda, V., Salvati, L., & Lanfredi, M. (2022). Density matters? Settlement expansion and land degradation in peri-urban and rural districts of Italy. Environmental Impact Assessment Review, 92, 106703.
Cox, K. R. (1995). Globalisation, competition and the politics of local economic development. Urban Studies, 32(2), 213–224.
Cox, K. R., & Mair, A. (1988). Locality and community in the politics of local economic development. Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 78(2), 307–325.
Cutaia, F. (2016). Strategic environmental assessment: Integrating landscape and urban planning. Springer.
Dickeson, R. C. (2010). Prioritizing academic programs and services: Reallocating resources to achieve strategic balance (Rev. ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
Domon, G. (2011). Landscape as resource: Consequences, challenges and opportunities for rural development. Landscape and Urban Planning, 100(4), 338–340.
Egidi, G., Salvati, L., & Vinci, S. (2020). The long way to Tipperary: City size and worldwide urban population trends, 1950–2030. Sustainable Cities and Society, 60, 102148.
Fares, S., Bajocco, S., Salvati, L., Camarretta, N., Dupuy, J.-L., Xanthopoulos, G., Guijarro, M., Madrigal, J., Hernando, C., & Corona, P. (2017). Characterizing potential wildland fire fuel in live vegetation in the Mediterranean region. Annals of Forest Science, 74, 1–14.
Ferrara, A., Kelly, C., Wilson, G. A., Nolè, A., Mancino, G., Bajocco, S., & Salvati, L. (2016). Shaping the role of "fast" and "slow" drivers of change in forest–shrubland socio-ecological systems. Journal of Environmental Management, 169, 155–166.
Ferrara, A., Kosmas, C., Salvati, L., Padula, A., Mancino, G., & Nolè, A. (2020). Updating the MEDALUS-ESA framework for worldwide land degradation and desertification assessment. Land Degradation & Development, 31(12), 1593–1607.
Ferrara, C., Carlucci, M., Grigoriadis, E., Corona, P., & Salvati, L. (2017). A comprehensive insight into the geography of forest cover in Italy: Exploring the importance of socioeconomic local contexts. Forest Policy and Economics, 75, 12–22.
Ferretti, M., Marchetto, A., Arisci, S., Bussotti, F., Calderisi, M., Carnicelli, S., Cecchini, G., Fabbio, G., Bertini, G., Matteucci, G., De Cinti, B., Salvati, L., & Pompei, E. (2014). On the tracks of nitrogen deposition effects on temperate forests at their southern European range: An observational study from Italy. Global Change Biology, 20(11), 3423–3438.
Francaviglia, R., Di Bene, C., Farina, R., Salvati, L., & Vicente-Vicente, J. L. (2019). Assessing "4 per 1000" soil organic carbon storage rates under Mediterranean climate: A comprehensive data analysis. Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies for Global Change, 24, 795–818.
Gimbert, X., Bisbe, J., & Mendoza, X. (2010). The role of performance measurement systems in strategy formulation processes. Long Range Planning, 43(4), 477–497.
Hariram, N. P., Mekha, K. B., Suganthan, V., & Sudhakar, K. (2023). Sustainalism: An integrated socio-economic-environmental model to address sustainable development and sustainability. Sustainability, 15(13), 10682.
Hirschman, A. O. (2014). Development projects observed. Brookings Institution Press.
Imbrenda, V., Quaranta, G., Salvia, R., Egidi, G., Salvati, L., Prokopová, M., Coluzzi, R., & Lanfredi, M. (2021). Land degradation and metropolitan expansion in a peri-urban environment. Geomatics, Natural Hazards and Risk, 12(1), 1797–1818.
Incerti, G., Feoli, E., Salvati, L., Brunetti, A., & Giovacchini, A. (2007). Analysis of bioclimatic time series and their neural network-based classification to characterise drought risk patterns in South Italy. International Journal of Biometeorology, 51, 253–263.
Ioppolo, G., Cucurachi, S., Salomone, R., Saija, G., & Shi, L. (2016). Sustainable local development and environmental governance: A strategic planning experience. Sustainability, 8(2), 180.
Jakob, M. (2022). Globalization and climate change: State of knowledge, emerging issues, and policy implications. Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change, 13(4), e771.
Jakubínský, J., Prokopová, M., Raška, P., Salvati, L., Bezak, N., Cudlín, O., Cudlín, P., Purkyt, J., Vezza, P., Camporeale, C., Daněk, J., Pástor, M., & Lepeška, T. (2021). Managing floodplains using nature-based solutions to support multiple ecosystem functions and services. Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Water, 8(5), e1545.

Kairis, O., Kosmas, C., Karavitis, C., Ritsema, C., Salvati, L., Acikalin, S., Alcalá, M., Alfama, P., Atlhopheng, J., Barrera, J., Belgacem, A., Solé-Benet, A., Brito, J., Chaker, M., Chanda, R., Coelho, C., Darkoh, M., Diamantis, I., Ermolaeva, O., Fassouli, V., Fei, W., Feng, J., Fernandez, F., Ferreira, A., Gokceoglu, C., Gonzalez, D., Gungor, H., Hessel, R., Juying, J., Khatteli, H., Khitrov, N., Kounalaki, A., Laouina, A., Lollino, P., Lopes, M., Magole, L., Medina, L., Mendoza, M., Morais, P., Mulale, K., Ocakoglu, F., Ouessar, M., Ovalle, C., Perez, C., Perkins, J., Pliakas, F., Polemio, M., Pozo, A., Prat, C., Qinke, Y., Ramos, A., Ramos, J., Riquelme, J., Romanenkov, V., Rui, L., Santaloia, F., Sebego, R., Sghaier, M., Silva, N., Sizemskaya, M., Soares, J., Sonmez, H., Taamallah, H., Tezcan, L., Torri, D., Ungaro, F., Valente, S., de Vente, J., Zagal, E., Zeiliguer, A., Zhonging, W., & Ziogas, A. (2014). Evaluation and selection of indicators for land degradation and desertification monitoring: Types of degradation, causes, and implications for management. Environmental Management, 54, 971–982.

Kantor, P. (2019). The dependent city revisited: The political economy of urban development and social policy. Routledge.

Keohane, R. O., & Hoffmann, S. (2018). Institutional change in Europe in the 1980s. In The new European Community (pp. 1–39). Routledge.

Kisman, Z. A., & Tasar, I. (2014). The key elements of local development. Procedia Economics and Finance, 15, 1689–1696.

Kline, P., & Moretti, E. (2014). People, places, and public policy: Some simple welfare economics of local economic development programs. Annual Review of Economics, 6(1), 629–662.

Kosmas, C., Detsis, V., Karamesouti, M., Kounalaki, K., Vassiliou, P., & Salvati, L. (2015). Exploring long-term impact of grazing management on land degradation in the socio-ecological system of Asteroussia Mountains, Greece. Land, 4(3), 541–559.

Kosmas, C., Kairis, O., Karavitis, C., Acikalin, S., Alcalá, M., Alfama, P., Atlhopheng, J., Barrera, J., Belgacem, A., Solé-Benet, A., Brito, J., Chaker, M., Chanda, R., Darkoh, M., Ermolaeva, O., Fassouli, V., Fernandez, F., Gokceoglu, C., Gonzalez, D., Gungor, H., Hessel, R., Khatteli, H., Khitrov, N., Kounalaki, A., Laouina, A., Magole, L., Medina, L., Mendoza, M., Mulale, K., Ocakoglu, F., Ouessar, M., Ovalle, C., Perez, C., Perkins, J., Pozo, A., Prat, C., Ramos, A., Ramos, J., Riquelme, J., Ritsema, C., Romanenkov, V., Sebego, R., Sghaier, M., Silva, N., Sizemskaya, M., Sonmez, H., Taamallah, H., Tezcan, L., de Vente, J., Zagal, E., Zeiliguer, A., & Salvati, L. (2015). An exploratory analysis of land abandonment drivers in areas prone to desertification. Catena, 128, 252–261.

Lamonica, G. R., Recchioni, M. C., Chelli, F. M., & Salvati, L. (2020). The efficiency of the cross-entropy method when estimating the technical coefficients of input–output tables. Spatial Economic Analysis, 15(1), 62–91.

Ledwith, M. (2011). Community development: A critical approach. Policy Press.

Lofland, L. H. (2024). The urban milieu: Locales, public sociability, and moral concern. In Social organization and social process (pp. 189–206). Routledge.

Loiseau, E., Saikku, L., Antikainen, R., Droste, N., Hansjürgens, B., Pitkänen, K., & Thomsen, M. (2016). Green economy and related concepts: An overview. Journal of Cleaner Production, 139, 361–371.

Maillat, D. (1998). Interactions between urban systems and localized productive systems: An approach to endogenous regional development in terms of innovative milieu. European Planning Studies, 6(2), 117–129.

Mancino, G., Nolè, A., Salvati, L., & Ferrara, A. (2016). In-between forest expansion and cropland decline: A revised USLE model for soil erosion risk under land-use change in a Mediterranean region. Ecological Indicators, 71, 544–550.

Munafò, M., Norero, C., Sabbi, A., & Salvati, L. (2010). Soil sealing in the growing city: A survey in Rome, Italy. Scottish Geographical Journal, 126(3), 153–161.

Nicolosi, S. F., & Mustert, L. (2020). The European Committee of the Regions as a watchdog of the principle of subsidiarity. Maastricht Journal of European and Comparative Law, 27(3), 284–301.

Palaniswamy, N., & Krishnan, N. (2012). Local politics, political institutions, and public resource allocation. Economic Development and Cultural Change, 60(3), 449–473.

Panara, C. (2016). The contribution of local and regional authorities to a "good" system of governance within the EU. Maastricht Journal of European and Comparative Law, 23(4), 611–639.
Park, M., Kim, Y., Lee, H. S., Han, S., Hwang, S., & Choi, M. J. (2013). Modeling the dynamics of urban development project: Focusing on self-sufficient city development. Mathematical and Computer Modelling, 57(9–10), 2082–2093.
Parkhurst, M. (2014). Learning in action: Evaluating collective impact.
Pescosolido, G. (2019). Italy's Southern Question: Long-standing thorny issues and current problems. Journal of Modern Italian Studies, 24(3), 441–455.
Peters, B. G. (2015). Pursuing horizontal management: The politics of public sector coordination. University Press of Kansas.
Pike, A., Rodríguez-Pose, A., & Tomaney, J. (2016). Local and regional development. Routledge.
Poister, T. H. (2010). The future of strategic planning in the public sector: Linking strategic management and performance. Public Administration Review, 70, S246–S254.
Punziano, G., & Urso, G. (2016). Local development strategies for inner areas in Italy: A comparative analysis based on plan documents. Italian Journal of Planning Practice, 6(1), 76–109.
Quaranta, G., Salvia, R., Salvati, L., Di Paola, V., Coluzzi, R., Imbrenda, V., & Simoniello, T. (2020). Long-term impacts of grazing management on land degradation in a rural community of Southern Italy: Depopulation matters. Land Degradation & Development, 31(16), 2379–2394.
Ramsay, M. (1996). Community, culture, and economic development: The social roots of local action. SUNY Press.
Ruddock, L., & Ruddock, S. (2022). Investment in infrastructure as a key to sustainable economic recovery: The role of the building industry. International Journal of Strategic Property Management, 26(6), 439–449.
Sabet, N. S., & Khaksar, S. (2024). The performance of local government, social capital and participation of villagers in sustainable rural development. The Social Science Journal, 61(1), 1–29.
Sachs, J. D. (2015). Investing in social capital. In World happiness report (pp. 152–166).
Sallustio, L., Pettenella, D., Merlini, P., Romano, R., Salvati, L., Marchetti, M., & Corona, P. (2018). Assessing the economic marginality of agricultural lands in Italy to support land use planning. Land Use Policy, 76, 526–534.
Salvati, L. (2013). Monitoring high-quality soil consumption driven by urban pressure in a growing city (Rome, Italy). Cities, 31, 349–356.
Salvati, L., & Carlucci, M. (2011). The economic and environmental performances of rural districts in Italy: Are competitiveness and sustainability compatible targets? Ecological Economics, 70(12), 2446–2453.
Salvati, L., & Carlucci, M. (2014). A composite index of sustainable development at the local scale: Italy as a case study. Ecological Indicators, 43, 162–171.
Salvati, L., & Zitti, M. (2005). Land degradation in the Mediterranean basin: Linking bio-physical and economic factors into an ecological perspective. Biota, 6, 67–77.
Salvati, L., & Zitti, M. (2008). Regional convergence of environmental variables: Empirical evidences from land degradation. Ecological Economics, 68(1–2), 162–168.
Salvati, L., & Zitti, M. (2009). Substitutability and weighting of ecological and economic indicators: Exploring the importance of various components of a synthetic index. Ecological Economics, 68(4), 1093–1099.
Salvati, L., Bajocco, S., Ceccarelli, T., Zitti, M., & Perini, L. (2011). Towards a process-based evaluation of land vulnerability to soil degradation in Italy. Ecological Indicators, 11(5), 1216–1227.
Salvati, L., Mavrakis, A., Colantoni, A., Mancino, G., & Ferrara, A. (2015). Complex adaptive systems, soil degradation and land sensitivity to desertification: A multivariate assessment of Italian agro-forest landscape. Science of the Total Environment, 521, 235–245.
Salvati, L., Morelli, V. G., Rontos, K., & Sabbi, A. (2013). Latent exurban development: City expansion along the rural-to-urban gradient in growing and declining regions of southern Europe. Urban Geography, 34(3), 376–394.
Salvati, L., Perini, L., Sabbi, A., & Bajocco, S. (2012). Climate aridity and land use changes: A regional-scale analysis. Geographical Research, 50(2), 193–203.

Salvati, L., Ranalli, F., Carlucci, M., Ippolito, A., Ferrara, A., & Corona, P. (2017). Forest and the city: A multivariate analysis of peri-urban forest land cover patterns in 283 European metropolitan areas. Ecological Indicators, 73, 369–377.
Salvati, L., Tombolini, I., Perini, L., & Ferrara, A. (2013). Landscape changes and environmental quality: The evolution of land vulnerability and potential resilience to degradation in Italy. Regional Environmental Change, 13, 1223–1233.
Salvati, L., Venanzoni, G., Serra, P., & Carlucci, M. (2016). Scattered or polycentric? Untangling urban growth in three southern European metropolitan regions through exploratory spatial data analysis. The Annals of Regional Science, 57, 1–29.
Salvati, L., Zitti, M., & Ceccarelli, T. (2008). Integrating economic and environmental indicators in the assessment of desertification risk: A case study. Applied Ecology and Environmental Research, 6(1), 129–138.
Seifollahi-Aghmiuni, S., Kalantari, Z., Egidi, G., Gaburova, L., & Salvati, L. (2022). Urbanisation-driven land degradation and socioeconomic challenges in peri-urban areas: Insights from Southern Europe. Ambio, 51(6), 1446–1458.
Shiell, A., Hawe, P., & Kavanagh, S. (2020). Evidence suggests a need to rethink social capital and social capital interventions. Social Science & Medicine, 257, 111930.
Simon, H. A., & Ando, A. (1961). Aggregation of variables in dynamic systems. Econometrica, 29(2), 111–138.
Stern, N. H., Unsworth, S., Valero, A., Zenghelis, D., Rydge, J., & Robins, N. (2020). Strategy, investment and policy for a strong and sustainable recovery: An action plan. Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics and Political Science.
Therivel, R. (2012). Strategic environmental assessment in action. Routledge.
Tomao, A., Quatrini, V., Corona, P., Ferrara, A., Lafortezza, R., & Salvati, L. (2017). Resilient landscapes in Mediterranean urban areas: Understanding factors influencing forest trends. Environmental Research, 156, 1–9.
Torre, A., & Traversac, J. B. (2011). Territorial governance: Local development, rural areas and agrofood systems. Springer.
Turok, I. (2012). Cities, regions and competitiveness. In Regional competitiveness (pp. 79–93). Routledge.
Vale, L. J. (2014). The politics of resilient cities: Whose resilience and whose city? Building Research & Information, 42(2), 191–201.
Van der Heide, C. M., & Heijman, W. (Eds.). (2013). The economic value of landscapes (Vol. 26). Routledge.
Van Ploeg, J. D., Renting, H., Brunori, G., Knickel, K., Mannion, J., Marsden, T., & Ventura, F. (2017). Rural development: From practices and policies towards theory. In The rural (pp. 201–218). Routledge.
Vardopoulos, I., Tsilika, E., Sarantakou, E., Zorpas, A. A., Salvati, L., & Tsartas, P. (2021). An integrated SWOT–PESTLE–AHP model assessing sustainability in adaptive reuse projects. Applied Sciences, 11(15), 7134.
Walter, S. (2016). Crisis politics in Europe: Why austerity is easier to implement in some countries than in others. Comparative Political Studies, 49(7), 841–873.
Wilson, G. A., Kelly, C. L., Briassoulis, H., Ferrara, A., Quaranta, G., Salvia, R., Detsis, V., Curfs, M., Cerda, A., El-Aich, A., Liu, H., Kosmas, C., Alados, C. L., Imeson, A., Landgrebe-Trinkunaite, R., Salvati, L., Naumann, S., Danwen, H., Iosifides, T., Kizos, T., Mancino, G., Nolè, A., Jiang, M., & Zhang, P. (2017). Social memory and the resilience of communities affected by land degradation. Land Degradation & Development, 28(2), 383–400.
Wu, H., Li, Y., Hao, Y., Ren, S., & Zhang, P. (2020). Environmental decentralization, local government competition, and regional green development: Evidence from China. Science of the Total Environment, 708, 135085.
Yakymchuk, A., Popadynets, N., Valyukh, A., Skrypko, T., & Levkov, K. (2021). Rural "green" tourism as a driver of local economy development in the process of decentralization of power. Agricultural and Resource Economics: International Scientific E-Journal, 7(1), 232–259.
Zhikharevich, B. S., Klimanov, V. V., & Maracha, V. G. (2021). Resilience of a territory: Concept, measurement, governance. Regional Research of Russia, 11, 1–8.