

Abstract

Urbanization, Demographic Dynamics and implications for Land Resource Management in the Mediterranean Region: A New Step Ahead in Understanding of Regional Complexity [†]

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Abstract: While urbanization has been closely related to economic development and demographic change, heterogeneous patterns and processes of regional growth and change reflect the uneven distribution of urbanization, the subtle impact of demographic dynamics and the consequent implications for land resource management and environmental sustainability. Differences in patterns of urban growth and change in a paradigmatic region such as the Mediterranean basin—often masked by statistics indicating a net increase in urban population—reflect regional divides in socio-demographic, economic and environmental variables. To better understand the impacts of these regional differences, interdisciplinary research should better link socio-demographic and economic patterns from the one side—and environmental dynamics from the other side—to urbanization and regional/local processes of change. Going from regional to local, multi-scale analysis of environmental change gives more opportunities to ascertain the combined effect of demographic dynamics on urbanization, evidencing the role of social transformations and the latent linkage with “hegemonic” concepts such as that of land degradation, which is intimately related with both socioeconomic dynamics and environmental sustainability. Reconnecting impacts of regional-scale socioeconomic change with local-scale ecological dynamics definitely contributes to an enriched knowledge of environmental histories, outlining how a study of differences under assumptions of non-linearity and complex system thinking is key to understand future socio-environmental trends in the study region. This contribution finally encourages studies within a multi-disciplinary arena, stimulating further literature reviews aimed at discussing these deserving issues—proposing new theoretical frameworks at the same time, with empirical approaches, comparative works and case studies providing the necessary, informed ground to science and policy.

Keywords: urban growth, population trends, entropy, environmental degradation, Southern Europe



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