



ARTICLE



SPATIAL JUSTICE AS A COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE FRAMEWORK: STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE OF RURAL PUBLIC LANDSCAPES FOR REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

JUSTIÇA ESPACIAL COMO UM FRAMEWORK DE INTELIGÊNCIA COMPETITIVA: GOVERNANÇA ESTRATÉGICA DAS PAISAGENS PÚBLICAS RURAIS PARA A COMPETITIVIDADE REGIONAL

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Editor in chief
Altieres De Oliveira Silva
Alumni.In Editors

How to cite this article:

Zhou, S., Julia, J., & Heriyawati, Y. (2026). Spatial Justice as a Competitive Intelligence Framework: Strategic Governance of Rural Public Landscapes for Regional Competitiveness. *Journal of Sustainable Competitive Intelligence*, 16, e0611. <https://doi.org/10.37497/eagleSustainable.v16i.611>

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study conceptualizes spatial justice as a competitive intelligence framework for rural territories, examining how justice-oriented governance of rural public landscapes generates strategic knowledge that supports decision-making and enhances regional competitiveness. It addresses a key gap between spatial planning and competitive intelligence by reframing rural public landscapes as intelligence-generating territorial assets rather than merely environmental or policy instruments.

Methodology/approach: The study adopts a systematic conceptual review and analytical synthesis approach. A structured literature review was conducted using Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, covering the period 2000-2024 and focusing on spatial justice, rural landscape governance, competitive intelligence, and regional competitiveness. The selected studies were analyzed using a thematic analytical matrix integrating justice dimensions, governance mechanisms, intelligence processes, and competitiveness outcomes.

Originality/Relevance: The originality of the study lies in extending competitive intelligence analysis to the territorial scale, moving beyond firm-centric perspectives. By positioning spatial justice as a strategic capability and rural public landscapes as intelligence platforms, the article aligns directly with the analytical scope of the *Journal of Sustainable Competitive Intelligence* and contributes to debates on strategic territorial governance.

Key findings: The findings indicate that spatial justice-oriented governance functions as an intelligence-processing system that enables the collection, interpretation, and mobilization of territorially embedded information related to access, participation, and recognition. These processes enhance strategic coordination, policy learning, and adaptive capacity, supporting multidimensional regional competitiveness, including economic resilience, social cohesion, environmental sustainability, and territorial attractiveness.

Theoretical/methodological contributions: The study advances competitive intelligence theory by integrating spatial justice into territorial governance analysis and demonstrates the value of systematic conceptual review and analytical synthesis for developing intelligence-based frameworks in interdisciplinary regional research.

Keywords: Spatial justice. Competitive intelligence. Rural public landscapes. Landscape governance. Regional competitiveness.



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37497/eagleSustainable.v16i.611>





RESUMO

Objetivo: Este estudo conceitua a justiça espacial como um framework de inteligência competitiva para territórios rurais, examinando como a governança orientada pela justiça das paisagens públicas rurais gera conhecimento estratégico que apoia a tomada de decisão e fortalece a competitividade regional. O trabalho aborda uma lacuna central entre o planejamento espacial e a inteligência competitiva ao reinterpretar as paisagens públicas rurais como ativos territoriais geradores de inteligência, e não apenas como instrumentos ambientais ou de políticas públicas.

Metodologia/abordagem: Adota-se uma abordagem de revisão conceitual sistemática e síntese analítica. Foi realizada uma revisão estruturada da literatura nas bases Scopus, Web of Science e Google Scholar, no período de 2000 a 2024, com foco em justiça espacial, governança de paisagens rurais, inteligência competitiva e competitividade regional. Os estudos selecionados foram analisados por meio de uma matriz analítica temática que integra dimensões de justiça, mecanismos de governança, processos de inteligência e resultados de competitividade.

Originalidade/Relevância: A originalidade reside na ampliação da análise da inteligência competitiva para a escala territorial, superando perspectivas centradas exclusivamente nas organizações. Ao posicionar a justiça espacial como uma capacidade estratégica e as paisagens públicas rurais como plataformas de inteligência, o artigo se alinha diretamente ao escopo analítico da *Journal of Sustainable Competitive Intelligence* e contribui para os debates sobre governança territorial estratégica.

Principais resultados: Os resultados indicam que a governança orientada pela justiça espacial funciona como um sistema de processamento de inteligência, viabilizando a coleta, interpretação e mobilização de informações territorialmente incorporadas relacionadas ao acesso, à participação e ao reconhecimento. Esses processos fortalecem a coordenação estratégica, o aprendizado em políticas públicas e a capacidade adaptativa, sustentando a competitividade regional multidimensional, incluindo resiliência econômica, coesão social, sustentabilidade ambiental e atratividade territorial.

Contribuições teóricas/metodológicas: O estudo avança a teoria da inteligência competitiva ao integrar a justiça espacial à análise da governança territorial e demonstra o valor da revisão conceitual sistemática e da síntese analítica para o desenvolvimento de frameworks baseados em inteligência em pesquisas regionais de natureza interdisciplinar.

Palavras-chave: Justiça espacial. Inteligência competitiva. Paisagens públicas rurais. Governança da paisagem. Competitividade regional.



1. INTRODUCTION

There has been a growing re-emergence of rural territories as geographical points of focus in national and regional developmental policies, especially in response to the growing socio-spatial disparities, environmental stress, and uneven economic expansion. Rural areas that were initially viewed as peripheral or residual spaces are now increasingly being considered as multifunctional spaces, including food production, ecosystem services, cultural heritage, social reproduction and landscape values (OECD, 2016; Woods, 2011). However, even with this new focus, the rural areas still experience structural disparities regarding access to communal facilities, infrastructure, decision-making, and investment opportunities that have a direct impact on their competitiveness and sustainability in the long term (Pike et al., 2017; Rodriguez-Pose, 2018).

In this context, the term public landscape has become prominent as a spatial and political category. Rural landscapes are not objects of physical or aesthetic phenomena but rather spaces that are socially constructed due to relations of power, modes of government, and decision-making (Cosgrove, 2008). Commons, agricultural land mosaics, river corridors, rural public spaces, and infrastructural landscapes are some of the key features of the everyday life of planning the local economy and solidifying the territorial identities. Nevertheless, their growth and administration tends to have unequal distribution of power which results in unequal access, exclusion, and spatial injustice (Harvey, 2009; Lefebvre, 1991).

Spatial justice provides a sound theoretical framework with which the planning, management, and distribution of rural public landscapes can be critically reviewed. Spatial justice is multifaceted, and covers not only distributive issues but also procedural, recognition and relational aspects of space, that is, who gains out of spatial dispensations, who is included in decision-making and whose values are acknowledged (Soja, 2010; Dikec, 2001). Spatial injustice in the rural setting takes the form of land concentration, unfairness in access to landscape amenities, marginalization of the local people, and prioritisation of external economic interest over the needs of the locality (Halfacree, 2006). Spatial justice has re-emerged as a central normative and analytical framework in contemporary spatial planning and territorial development (Davoudi & Brooks, 2014b; Fainstein, 2013). In rural contexts, these concerns are particularly salient which directly influence territorial well-being and development trajectories (OECD, 2020; McDonagh, 2022). Governance scholarship underscores the growing importance of collaborative and adaptive governance arrangements in responding to complex territorial challenges, particularly in contexts marked by uncertainty and institutional change (Ansell, Sørensen, & Torfing, 2020). Empirical and policy-oriented studies further demonstrate that institutional quality and spatially sensitive public policies play a decisive role in shaping regional development outcomes and mitigating spatial inequality, thereby reinforcing the strategic relevance of justice-oriented rural public landscape governance for long-term regional competitiveness (Rodríguez-Pose & Ketterer, 2019; Kanbur & Venables, 2005).

Recent scholarship has extended the concept of spatial justice into rural contexts,

illustrating how territorial cohesion and socio-spatial fairness shape sustainable rural development and well-being outcomes beyond traditional economic metrics (Mahon et al., 2023). Complementing this perspective, systematic reviews of rural development interventions emphasize that governance-oriented contextual strategies can unlock the capacities of small-scale farming communities and strengthen localized socio-economic resilience, especially when policies support education, logistics, and institutional coordination (Undurraga & Pokorny, 2024). Together, these recent contributions demonstrate that spatial justice and context-sensitive governance approaches are central not only for normative fairness but also for enhancing the sustainability and competitiveness of rural territories in the face of shifting demographic, economic, and environmental conditions.

Simultaneously, the issue of regional competitiveness has been placed at the center of the agenda of the state actions, which is frequently related to the capacity to innovate, attractiveness, productivity, and resilience (Camagni, 2002; Kitson et al., 2004). Competitiveness has been always seen in the urban and economic context, but it has increasingly become clear that the place-based approach in rural areas needs to focus on their own, place-specific strategies that build on their own territorial resources instead of imitating the patterns of urban development (Barca et al., 2012). Rural civic landscapes are a major yet little researched element of such strategies since they are perceived to play a dual part in economic diversification, social integration, environmental sustainability, and place branding.

The current literature has a tendency to discuss rural landscape planning, spatial justice, and regional competitiveness in different analytical frameworks, even though they all converge in terms of debates. Research into rural landscapes is often concerned with conservation, heritage or environmental management without considering the aspect of governance and justice (Antrop, 2005; Selman, 2012). Spatial justice literature has on the other hand been predominantly focused in urban contexts, the provision of infrastructure, and housing without much focus on the rural territorial dynamics (Soja, 2010; Marcuse et al., 2009). Likewise, in many cases, competitiveness models are biased in favor of economic metrics, and the importance of landscape quality, social equity, and governance are undervalued to determine the performance of regions in the long run (Rodriguez-Pose and Wilkie, 2019).

Although the rural landscapes are increasingly being seen as key strategic territorial resources, more than 40 years of research is still fragmented in the literature of the public policy and spatial planning, as well as regional development. Although much of the spatial justice scholarly work offers powerful normative and analytical approaches to evaluate the existence of inequalities within the territory, this work has seldom been mobilized as a strategic intelligence instrument that can guide competitive positioning and decision-making in the regional level. Equally, the literature of regional competitiveness is inclined to favour economic measures of performance and innovation regimes, but this is usually at the expense of the justice-based governance of spatial resources that creates actionable intelligence to bring long-term territorial benefit.

This lapse is especially apparent in the sources related to the rural public landscape. Landscape governance is generally talked about in terms of environmental, cultural or participatory, but rarely in the form of an intelligence producing system that helps in strategic sensing, coordination and policy learning amongst actors or scales. Consequently, the possibility of rural public landscapes to serve as sources of competitive intelligence through generating territorially-based knowledge regarding resource, social needs, institutional capacity, and development paths, has not been theorized.

Trying to eliminate this gap, this article brings the main argument forward that the concept of spatial justice could be implemented as a competitive intelligence framework of rural territories. Through the design of the manner in which the information about access, participation, recognition and mobilization is gathered, interpreted and mobilized using governance processes, the spatially fair landscape policies have the potential to promote strategic decision-making and bring about sustainable regional competitiveness.

Based on this, the research problem that will be used to guide this study is:

What is the nature of how spatial justice-oriented governance of rural public landscapes are able to serve as a competitive intelligence system which informs strategic decision-making and enhances competitiveness of a region?

The article aims to solve this issue by trying to achieve the following three things:

- (i) To conceptualize spatial justice as an intelligence producing structure of rural public landscape regulation;
- (ii) To examine the role of governance arrangements in mediating the strategic insights derived out of spatial information; and
- (iii) To explore the contribution of justice-based landscape intelligence towards multidimensional regional competitiveness.

Restructuring the concept of rural public landscape governance as a reflection of competitive intelligence, this paper situates spatial justice as a normative value as well as a strategic capacity inherent to the system of territorial governance.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework taken in this undertaking lies in the interdisciplinary discourse that compares the spatial theory, landscape studies, the governance theory, and literature of regional development. Instead of seeing rural public landscapes as neutral or more simply physical, this framework imagines it as a socio-spatial assemblage which is both constituted by institutional structures, power, and policy decisions. With such conceptualization, it becomes possible to analyze rural landscapes as not a mere environmental or cultural resource, but as a strategic tool that contributes to the policy and territorial development of people.

This framework does not end up in traditional sectoral approaches but rather incorporates the normative and analytical aspects. It is a product of a synthesis of justice-based spatial theory with governance-based views of landscape planning and competitiveness. The resulting synthesis will allow to critically analyze the production,

management and distribution of the public landscapes, as well as to clarify how the processes influence the equity as well as the long-term performance of the region. The framework is structured on three interconnected dimensions; spatial justice as a normative idea, rural public landscapes as socio-spatial structures and governance as a mediating factor that connects the landscapes to regional competitiveness. Figure 1 illustrates how the principles of spatial justice are applied to inform the development of the rural public landscapes through inclusive governance, which generates equal and competitive rural development results.

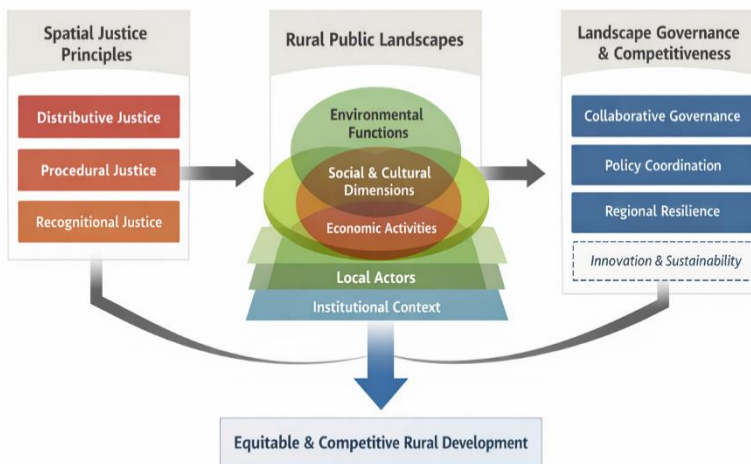


Figure 1. The figure illustrates how the principles of spatial justice are applied to inform the development of the rural public landscapes through inclusive governance, which generates equal and competitive rural development results.

2.1 Spatial justice as a normative framework for territorial development

Spatial justice is based on broader conceptualizations of social justice but with a special focus on the spatial aspect of inequality, exclusion, and opportunity. It acknowledges the fact that justice is achieved not only by fair social ordering but also by spatial systems that in turn are just. Space is therefore understood as a dynamic aspect where justice and injustice are created and recreated as opposed to a passive vessel of social relations.

Normatively, spatial justice criticizes the development models that give more emphasis to efficiency and growth at the expense of equity. It highlights the systematic privilege that the decision to plan, land-use rules and investment in infrastructure give to some groups of people and areas and disadvantage others. Spatial justice is especially relevant in rural settings, where the historical processes of land concentration and peripheralisation and the uneven intervention of the state are observed.



Theorists operating in the fields of political geography and critical planning theory single out three components of spatial justice, which are interconnected, and they are distributive justice, procedural justice, and recognitional justice (Young, 1990; Fraser, 2009). Distributive justice deals with the fair distribution of the spatial resources including land, public space, and environmental facilities. Procedural justice is concerned with inclusion, openness, and involvement in the decisions. Recognitional justice focuses on respecting various identities, cultural practices and local knowledge systems which are usually ignored during rural planning.

In countryside areas, manifestations of failures of spatial justice are common in policies that are about the landscape serving outsourced economic interests like extractive industries, large-scale agribusiness, or tourism capital at the cost of local requirements and potentials. These processes contribute to the existence of spatial inequalities and reduce the possibilities of local development. This means that rural public landscapes should be governed in a manner that rejuvenates benefits, strengthens local actors and places more emphasis on place-based values and values, which should be part of a justice-oriented approach.

2.2 Rural public landscapes as social space

Rural communal landscapes are becoming seen as sophisticated socio-spatial systems and not as inert or un-anthropogenic spaces. Instead of depicting landscapes as visual and ecological spaces, the field of landscape scholarship has fronted landscapes as relational spaces created by social actions, institutional structures, and cultural significances (Ingold, 2000; Mitchell, 2003). This opinion is particularly relevant in the rural settings where the land is closely related to the livelihood, identity, and the shared memory.

Public landscapes include formally public spaces like commons, paths, riverbanks and village squares, and landscapes which serve a public purpose, even though the ownership is often divided. These areas support the daily socialization, economic life and environmental processes. Their social character is not just created by status under law since it is created through shared use, collective meaning, and social accessibility.

Land use and access conflicts have been aggravated by the fact that the rural landscapes are changing towards globalization, market integration and environmental change. Agricultural intensification, conservation zoning, the development of renewable energy resources, and rural tourism are some of the processes that transform landscapes in a way that can either marginalize local people or reshape the definition of the concept of publicness. Landscapes are arenas of conflict, as Mitchell (2003) claims, as rival versions of development, nature, and identity collide with each other.

The concept of rural public landscapes as socio spatial systems highlights the significance of institutional arrangements and policy frameworks in the development of the results of the landscape. It also points to the necessity to consider landscape development as not only an environmental performance or economic output but also in the context of



social inclusion, accessibility, and overall benefit.

On this level of analysis, one may use figures and tables, e.g., conceptual diagrams of the relationships between actors or indicators of the access to the landscape, to explain elaborate interactions.

2.3 Governance, rural landscapes, and regional competitiveness

Governance creates the institutional and procedural connection between spatial justice, landscape development and regional competitiveness. Contrary to the traditional models that focus on the government at the center, governance focuses on the networks of public, private and civil society actors where they make decisions together at more than one scale (Jessop, 2002). Governance structure is often decentralized in the rural areas because of overlapping jurisdictions, sector policies and power imbalances between actors.

The landscape governance needs to be coordinated in policy areas like spatial planning, agriculture, environmental management and regional development. It is also based on the ability of institutions to enable participation, conflict negotiation, and knowledge integration of the locals. The failures in governance may be in the form of policy lack of coherence, lack of inclusion or local communities, or that decision making process is captured by dominant interests.

In the regional development perspective, the quality of governance is becoming one of the determinants of competitiveness. Those areas which are characterized by an inclusive, transparent and adaptive governance structures are more likely to be successful regarding the innovation, resilience and social cohesion (Farole et al., 2011). Governance systems that allow collective landscape stewardship can make rural regions more economically diverse, enhance territorial identity, and increase living standards in rural regions.

Within this context, competitiveness is not narrowed down to cost efficiency and performance in the marketplace. Rather, it can be described as the ability of an area to maintain economic activities, attract and maintain people and respond to external shocks, maintaining social and environmental integrity. Justice-oriented landscape governance can help this ability, by matching the plans of development and the local assets and values.

Co-management and collaborative planning are examples of participatory models of governance which have been demonstrated to increase legitimacy and the effectiveness of policy in the long term (Ostrom, 2010). These models enhance peace and shared responsibility among playing actors, thus enhancing competitiveness sustainability by including the local actors in the decision making process of the landscape.

2.4 Spatial justice as a competitive intelligence capability

Competitive intelligence in this context is viewed as an organized procedure by which organizations or regions organize, analyze, and use information in strategic decision-making and maintenance of competitive edge. Competitive intelligence in a territorial sense



goes beyond market surveillance to incorporate institutional capability, social processes, spatial assets and performance of governance.

In that light, spatial justice acts as a sieve and logic of organization of territorial intelligence. Distributive justice informs about spatial distribution of resources and services; procedural justice informs about inclusiveness in decision-making and legitimacy of governing body; and recognitional justice informs about the knowledge culturally engrained, identities and local values that are not always mentioned in mainstream planning measurements.

These dimensions of justice when woven into rural landscape governance systems make it possible to generate a strategic knowledge of the territory continuously. Governance arrangements are intelligence systems that can translate dispersed spatial information into common understanding which underlines policy learning, sectoral coordination and responsiveness to the territory.

As a result, public landscapes in rural areas may be said to constitute intelligence platforms, which is where spatial information, input of stakeholders and feedback loop of institutions intersect. Such re-framing creates a direct analytical linkage between spatial justice, governance processes, competitive intelligence processes, and regional competitiveness outcome, and thus offers a consistent theoretical basis of the research. This framework positions rural public landscapes not only as governance objects but as intelligence infrastructures that continuously generate strategic knowledge for territorial decision-making.

3. METHOD

This study adopts a systematic conceptual review and analytical synthesis design, which is appropriate for theory development in interdisciplinary fields where empirical fragmentation limits cumulative knowledge. Rather than pursuing statistical generalization, the objective is to construct a coherent analytical framework linking spatial justice, governance, competitive intelligence, and regional competitiveness, consistent with conceptual and theory-building research traditions.

The literature review followed a transparent and replicable protocol inspired by PRISMA guidelines, adapted for qualitative conceptual research. Searches were conducted in Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, covering the period 2000–2024, to capture both foundational and contemporary contributions. The search strategy combined the following keywords and Boolean operators: *spatial justice*, *rural public landscapes*, *landscape governance*, *territorial governance*, *competitive intelligence*, and *regional competitiveness*.

The inclusion criteria were:

- (1) peer-reviewed journal articles and academic books;
- (2) publications addressing at least **two** of the four analytical dimensions (spatial justice, governance, competitive intelligence, regional competitiveness);
- (3) Explicit theoretical, conceptual, or analytical contributions relevant to territorial or



regional development.

The exclusion criteria included:

- (1) purely descriptive case reports without analytical discussion;
- (2) non-scholarly or opinion-based sources;
- (3) publications lacking relevance to territorial governance or competitiveness debates.

The initial search yielded 312 publications. After removing duplicates and screening titles and abstracts, 146 publications were retained for full-text assessment. Following full-text screening, 82 sources met all inclusion criteria and were selected for detailed analysis.

The selected literature was coded thematically using an analytical matrix structured around four dimensions:

- (1) spatial justice principles (distributive, procedural, recognitional);
- (2) governance mechanisms and institutional arrangements;
- (3) competitive intelligence processes (information generation, interpretation, coordination, and learning);
- (4) regional competitiveness outcomes.

The analytical procedure involved iterative comparison and conceptual integration, allowing the identification of causal linkages and mediating mechanisms between justice-oriented governance and competitiveness outcomes. The resulting framework was validated through internal coherence checks and theoretical triangulation across governance, spatial planning, and competitive intelligence literatures. While the study does not include primary empirical data, methodological rigor is ensured through systematic source selection, transparent analytical steps, and consistency between theoretical constructs and policy implications.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section outlines and critically analyses the analytical results based on the conceptual synthesis and policy-driven analysis outlined in the methodology section. Instead of depending on the empirical measure, the findings represent a logical interpretation of the theoretical constructs, models of governance and policy tools that are relevant to rural public landscape development through the lens of spatial justice. The further discussion is divided into subsections directly relating to the objectives of the study, which are, (i) the role of spatial justice in the development of rural public landscape, (ii) the governance mechanisms that influence landscape outcomes, and (iii) the role of justice-oriented landscape policies in making regions to be more competitive.

4.1 Contextual circumstances of countryside public landscapes

Rural public landscapes reflect the historical disparity in land, infrastructure, and political representation. These inequities are worsened by lack of integrated systems of governance that lead to selective investment, marginalization of local actors and unequal



benefits of the landscape. The findings also indicate that countryside sceneries serve as material and symbolic resources. In addition to their economic and ecological roles, they help in social cohesion, continuity of culture and territorial identity. Landscapes are at risk of becoming extractive or commodified through the exclusion of these functions in policy frameworks, with the result of degrading the sustainability of the region in the long term.

4.2 The outcomes of spatial justice of rural landscape development

To address the first objective, the analysis has shown that spatial justice is a critical evaluative tool that can be used to evaluate the rural public landscape development. Justice-based outcomes become actualized when landscape policies ensure that resources are evenly distributed, that people are included in decision making and that local knowledge and cultural ways of doing things are taken into consideration.

From a competitive intelligence perspective, these contextual inequalities represent critical information gaps that influence strategic territorial decision-making and governance performance.

Table 1 summarizes the most important dimensions of spatial justice and implications on the rural public landscape.

Table 1 - Spatial justice as an analytical framework for rural landscape governance

Dimension of Spatial Justice	Analytical Focus	Implications for Rural Public Landscapes	Strategic Intelligence Function
Distributive justice	Allocation of spatial resources and services	Equitable access to land, amenities, and ecosystem services	Identifies spatial inequalities and resource distribution gaps
Procedural justice	Decision-making processes and participation	Inclusion of local actors in landscape planning and governance	Generates governance intelligence on participation and institutional legitimacy
Recognitional justice	Acknowledgment of identities, values, and local knowledge	Protection of cultural landscapes and place-based practices	Captures contextual and tacit territorial knowledge

4.3 Governance, mechanisms and performance of institutions

The response to the second objective, the findings show that the quality of governance is a determining factor in landscape outcomes. Rural landscape governance is usually characterized by multi-level and multi-actor structures, where coordination failures



and power asymmetries are the order of the day. Divided institutional roles are often associated with poor policy implementation and accountability.

The analysis has determined three prevailing models of governance that shape the rural public landscape; hierarchical governance, market-oriented governance and collaborative governance. Table 2 presents their respective performance.

Table 2 - Governance models and strategic intelligence effects in rural landscapes

Governance Model	Dominant Actors	Governance Characteristics	Effects on Landscape Outcomes	Strategic Intelligence Function
Hierarchical governance	State institutions	Centralized regulation and top-down control	Policy coherence but limited adaptability	Produces standardized, low-context intelligence
Market-oriented governance	Private sector actors	Investment-driven, efficiency-focused	Risk of exclusion and commodification	Generates market signals with limited social insight
Collaborative governance	Public, private, and community actors	Participation, coordination, shared responsibility	Social legitimacy and adaptive capacity	Integrates multi-source intelligence and supports learning

4.4 Rural public landscapes and regional competitiveness

In relation to the third objective, the results confirm that justice-oriented rural public landscapes contribute positively to regional competitiveness. Competitiveness is interpreted here as a multidimensional capacity encompassing economic resilience, social cohesion, environmental sustainability, and territorial attractiveness.

Justice-based landscape governance enhances competitiveness through multiple pathways: improving quality of life, supporting diversified rural economies, strengthening social capital, and reinforcing place-based identity. These effects are cumulative and long-term, contrasting with short-term growth strategies that prioritize external investment without territorial integration.

Table 3 presents the key linkages between rural public landscapes and competitiveness outcomes.



Table 3 - Intelligence-based contributions of rural public landscapes to regional competitiveness

Landscape Function	Competitiveness Dimension	Strategic Outcome	Competitive Intelligence Contribution
Environmental stewardship	Regional resilience	Climate adaptation and risk mitigation	Early warning signals on environmental vulnerability
Social accessibility	Social cohesion	Population retention and well-being	Intelligence on social needs and service gaps
Cultural identity	Territorial attractiveness	Place branding and tourism development	Differentiation intelligence for regional positioning
Economic multifunctionality	Economic diversification	Local employment and innovation	Insight into endogenous growth opportunities

4.5 Synthesis of results and policy implications.

Synthesis of the analysis proves that the rural development of the public space directed at the principles of spatial justice and facilitated by the concept of integrative governance is a strategic tool of the official policy to improve the competitiveness of regions. The results highlight the importance of promoting coherence in policies, their cross-sectional inclusion, and place-based governance in order to translate the principle of justice into quantifiable results in territorial terms.

From a policy perspective, the findings suggest that rural development efforts must directly entail the introduction of spatial justice concepts in the landscape planning, funding structure, and appraisal procedures. Failure to integrate it may lead to intensification of current inequality and dilution of long term competitiveness of rural places.

To sum it all up, the facts, as described above, substantiate the hypothesis that spatial justice can be used as both a normative ideal, as well as a strategically feasible means of sustainable and competitive rural development.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Combining the viewpoints of spatial justice theory, landscape studies, governance research, and regional development scholarship, the paper establishes that rural public landscapes are not merely assets of either an environmental or aesthetic nature, but instead, are socio-spatial resources whose implications are deeply dimensional to issues of equity, sustainability and performance of the territory.



The main finding of this study is that spatial justice provides a strong normative and analytical approach to guide the rural policies of the public landscape. By integrating principles of distributive, procedural and recognitional justice into the landscape development and governance, the rural territories will be better placed to ensure equitable access to resources, significant involvement in the process of making decisions, and the acknowledgement of local identities and knowledge systems. The above conditions have a direct relationship with the improvement of social cohesion, environmental stewardship, and long-term resilience of the region.

In the case of inference, a secondary key is related to the key role of governance in mapping spatial justice into the concrete landscape and competitiveness results. This analysis shows that collaborative and multi-actor governance schemes have higher potential of balancing the development of public landscapes and the achievement of objectives based on justice compared to a strictly hierarchical or market-driven model. Inclusive governance enriches the legitimacy and alleviates conflict as well as maintaining policy coherence in the realm of spatial planning, agriculture, environmental management and regional development.

On the regional competitiveness approach, the results dispute the economic interpretations of competitiveness in a narrower way. This paper finds that rural civic landscapes managed through justice-based systems have a competitiveness effect through quality of life, territorial fortification, economic diversification, and adaptive capacity to changing environmental and socioeconomic conditions. In this respect, spatial justice and competitiveness are not competing objectives but the aspect of sustainable regional development that complement each other.

To begin with, the study is theoretical and policy-based, lacking the main empirical evidence. Although this gives freedom to the integration of theories and the possibility of analytical depth, it limits the chance of evaluating causal relationships or measuring outcomes. Secondly, the analysis relies on the general rural development contexts and does not emphasize a particular country or a region, which can reduce the short-term applicability of the results to a particular territorial context. Thirdly, there is a lack of empirical validation of the theoretical synthesis behind the indicative datasets and comparative frameworks that are used.

These weaknesses can be overcome in future studies in the following ways. Proposed framework testing and refinement in particular rural settings could be tested and refined by empirical research, such as case study, comparative regional study, or mixed-methods research. The longitudinal study would be interested in researching the effect of the justice-oriented landscape governance on the competitiveness outcomes. Further research can also address how the coming challenges, including climate-change adaptation, digitalization, and demographic transition, can influence the transformation of rural arenas of the public and the governance system.

In conclusion, the article underscores the need to pay attention to spatial justice within the rural development of the public landscape and governance as a potential pathway for inclusive and competitive regional development. By framing spatial justice as a



competitive intelligence capability, this study contributes to JSCI by extending intelligence theory beyond firms and markets to territorial governance systems.

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