

Community resilience, land degradation and lock-in effects: evidence from the Alento region, Basilicata, Italy

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Ever since Adger's (2000) seminal article outlining the importance of understanding resilience at community level, the notion of 'community resilience' has assumed ever greater importance. As a result, the 2000s have seen a plethora of studies addressing resilience issues at community level from a variety of perspectives (Cutter et al., 2008; Masten and Obradovic, 2008; Thomalla and Klocker Larsen, 2010; Davidson, 2010; Wilson, 2012). While the response of communities to 'disasters' or 'hazards' feature strongly in these studies (e.g. Dudley et al., 2009), less work appears to have been undertaken at the interface between community resilience and land degradation, and apart from studies that indirectly link vulnerability with landuse management (e.g. Blaikie and Brookfield, 1987; Watts and Bohle, 1993; Thomas, 2008) few studies have *explicitly* linked questions about community resilience with land degradation processes.

Building on these studies, we wish to investigate the importance and implications of so-called 'lock-in' effects and how they affect resilience processes in communities affected by land degradation. Lock-in effects can be understood as drivers that shoehorn certain community decision-making processes into specific 'pathways' or development 'corridors' beyond which certain human decision-making actions become either 'unthinkable' or impossible to implement (Rotmans *et al.*, 2002; Wilson, 2013). Our empirical evidence will come from four small rural communities in the Alento region of Basilicata (southern Italy) and will be based on interviews with a range of stakeholder groups at both local and regional level, secondary sources and focus group discussions. Specific attention will be placed on understanding the importance of economic and socio-psychological lock-ins influencing the adaptive capacity and resilience of the case study communities to address issues of land degradation, and how these lock-ins affect the adoption of innovative and more sustainable land management options.