

Chapter 24

Spatial Planning and Regional Growth: A Benchmarking Study for North– South Aegean and Crete

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ABSTRACT

Spatial Planning focuses on planning and management of space, as a core axis towards sustainable development, as well as balanced sustainable development, closely related with economic determining factors, such as productivity, economic environment, investments and competitiveness. This paper attempts to analyze spatial planning framework and its contribution towards sustainable regional development. More precisely, this paper analyses the case studies of the region of the North Aegean and South Aegean, especially the islands of Lesvos, Rhodes, and Crete.

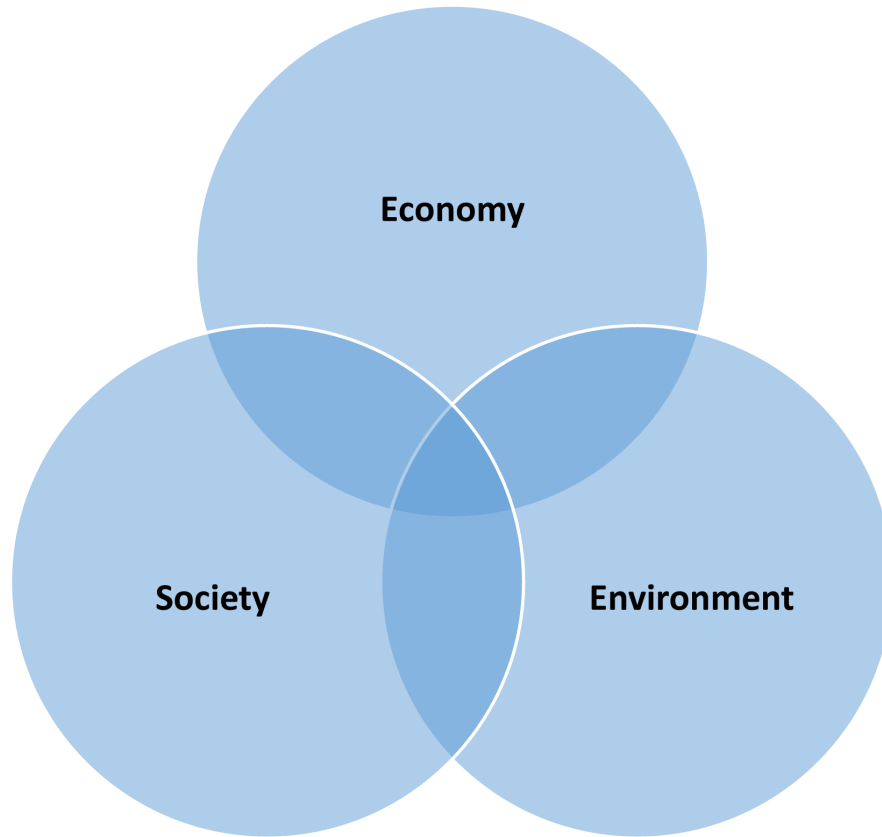
SPATIAL PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Until the end of 1980 decade, when the term of ‘sustainable development’ emerged, development has been mostly referred to economic growth. Sustainable development has been established as a scientific term comprising a three-dimensional meaning: namely economic, social and environmental. Developments in the theory of sustainable development sets as prerequisites the improvement of economic indicators, namely economic growth, also combined with improvements in social indicators, namely social development, also including the environmental sustainability (Delladetsimas, 1997). Figure 1 illustrates the

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Figure 1. Development factors

Source: Own elaboration



three factors of economic and social development. Basic aim resulting from sustainable development policies implementation is the enhancement of welfare and living standards, the efficient management of available resources, pursuing not only present welfare, but also welfare regarding future generations.

Within this framework, 'space' is considered to be as one of the major elements, determining the interrelations between socio-economic conditions and production, both in regional and sectoral level, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Spatial Planning within sustainable development planning is essential for spatial sustainable development across space (regionals, national and international space). Within this analysis, it is important that different regions are not moving within the same developing path, due to different geographical, social and economic conditions. Under this spectrum, spatial planning is an important driver in enabling coordination of services, infrastructure and authorities, towards a harmonious sustainable development widely provided to citizens.

Spatial planning promotes coordination between different policy orientations, following the core principles of sustainable development, focusing on equilibrium between competitiveness, social integration, welfare and environmental protection (Gospodini, 2007). National Spatial Planning Policy is divided into three policy levels (Loukakis, 2002):

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