

***Interactive comment on “Spatio-temporal analysis of the urban-rural gradient structure: an application in a Mediterranean mountainous landscape (Serra San Bruno, Italy)” by G. Modica et al.***

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This research article is worthwhile. It analyses the evolution of a landscape in the Calabria Region (Italy) through a robust and well justified methodology. In addition, it is able to obtain remarkable results that are discussed in relation to the theoretical background, namely the rural-urban land use evolution in the spatial context of the case-study area (including an interesting point on the urban-rural gradient structure). Indeed, it is important to highlight that the background contents have been intensively developed and are very informative. Thus, it is obvious that this article is the result

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of a sustained and in-depth research that has been especially rigorous and precise in methodological terms; in other words, there is a lot of work for elaborating such a document, particularly research developed through GIS. Moreover, the article is innovative, given that it shows results for a Southern European case-study area using advanced theoretical developments that had not been applied before in this European macro-region. Furthermore, the expression is clear and it is well written and readable, with an adequate English language style. Finally, the structure is appropriate, inferring outstanding conclusions that are relevant for a wider audience. However, I would like to express two tiny comments that do not shadow my positive overall impression. The first is that the studied landscape is repeatedly defined as Mediterranean and, from a macro-regional and cultural approach, it is; but from the vegetation that is quoted therein this is not obvious, at least from the perspective of the Iberian Peninsula, where this type of vegetation might be considered Eurosiberian (Atlantic); this maybe requires a clarification. The second is that landscape is understood, congruently with the landscape ecology approach, as an objective reality that has metric properties; I would like to mention that there are several disciplines that understand that landscape is more than that, especially in a Mediterranean long-term human-made environment and, in this sense, that it embraces representations, perceptions, visions, etc. as well, that per se are not 'objective'; in the case of Italy, Emilio Sereni is clearly a referent in this respect that cannot be ignored. At an international scale, the European Landscape Convention states that landscape "means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors"; the question is where is the perception by people in this contribution.

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