

Article

Civil Society Mobilizations Shaping Landscape in Genoa and Girona Areas: Results and Lessons Learnt from the Savingscapes Project

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Abstract: This paper deals with the results of the “SavingScapes” research project, where Girona (SP) and Genoa (IT) areas were chosen as case studies to assess the role and relevance of civil society in landscape alteration and conservation. These contexts share many features which led to similar transformative pressures and consequent deeply rooted place attachment clashing in the form of social mobilizations. Nevertheless, the civil society approach and actions proved profoundly different. Hence, there is a need to define a shared methodology to make them comparable. The authors define seven categories, ranging from defeat to prefigurative politics, to assess local mobilization in terms of territorial impacts.

Keywords: environmental mobilization; sustainable planning; landscape; preservation; territorial identity



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1. Introduction

The present work investigates social mobilization theories as an instrument or context to highlight their relevance to an issue that is central to this research: the preservation of territory and landscape. The starting hypothesis is that mobilization has played a key role in the construction and visibility of territorial and environmental issues [1,2]. Finding solutions largely depends on the actions and consequences of mobilizations. The present work focuses on the results of environmental mobilizations in two province-sized areas: the Metropolitan City of Genoa in Italy and the Province of Girona (Figure 1), on the Spanish side. Although these two sub-regional territorial units have much in common, from their coastal location, to the driving forces behind their economy, and the fact that their landscape plays an important role in development, activism, and the link between their inhabitants and their natural surroundings, they host very different human settlements.

In terms of population, Genoa counts a five-fold number of Girona inhabitants. Genoa represents the capital and socio-economic hub of a linear continuous conurbation along the coast of the Liguria Region, where the port economy and industry have shaped its development for decades, while Girona is one of the several inner centers (the only place where the population exceeds 100,000) of a multi-nodal network of towns, cities, and counties throughout the region.

Despite their deeply different backgrounds, a constant transformative pressure acting in both contexts, together with a strong attachment to places, has driven people to react and mobilize.

In these mobilizations, a different cultural approach can be traced: Genoa acts as a merely urban subject, while Girona shows a strong rural identity. Nevertheless, certain parallels and similarities have been detected. An extraordinary quality landscape in both areas is the common layer on which the opportunity for local activation linked to territorial identity and the preservation of natural spaces is historically linked. For both,

the perception of destructive forces acting on the landscape identity characters is a key factor that explains the movements activation process.



Figure 1. Location of Genoa and Girona areas.

A further focus of the research deals with the role that territory plays in forging the local identity and culture, in terms of relevance within public debate and governance tensions and conflicts, and on how civil society relates to land planning, management policies and instruments.

To this aim, the authors will introduce an outcome-based approach to analyze several case-studies from both contexts through the lens of the results achieved by local movements mobilization.

The present work is structured into four sections. Initially a theoretical framework is defined on the link between social movements and territorial identity and preservation. The chosen methodology and the analytical categories defined for the case-studies' assessment are introduced, as well.

The Section 2 deals with the description of the two study areas. The authors review the main socioeconomic and planning stages throughout the last 50–70 years, as well as the evolution of those movements and respective actions concerning territorial-environmental issues.

The Section 3 focuses on the results of the research, where the aim of the authors is to provide an original taxonomy-made up of seven impact-based categories- to assess mobilizations' outcomes from both territories. The Section 4 summarizes the structural role of mobilizations in territorial and heritage governance and preservation.

2. “Savingscapes” Project: Theoretical Framework and Methodology

2.1. Movements in the Last Decades' Theories

While the definition of a single theoretical basis from the many possible ones is not the aim, it is essential. Theories of social mobilization have been widely researched and debated in the field of political science since the last quarter of the 20th century (Figure 2). The roots of social mobilization stretch back at least a century, but it was only in the 1980s that people began to talk about the “New Social Movements” [3,4]. It was then that the ability of mobilizations to bring people together visibly and make an impact gained importance and when, from the theoretical perspective, analyses aimed to explain how social mobilization is constructed [5].

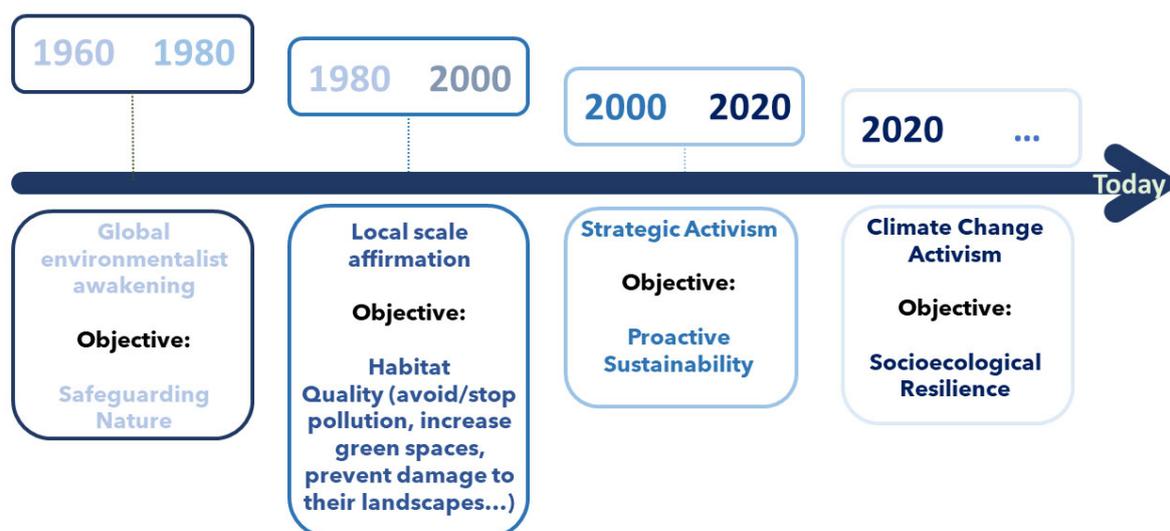


Figure 2. Environmental movements approach and evolution cycles.

Numerous authors [6,7] have discussed the concept of identity as a two-fold argument in this context: firstly, in interpreting the social foundations of movements, and secondly as the set of threatened values triggering the mobilization.

Indeed, the territory, natural environment, or landscape features may play several roles within social mobilizations: they may act as a reason for their existence; as a pretext; as a stage; as an instrument; or as an objective, being territorial and environmental impacts one of the most explicit manifestations of the consequences of economic, technological and social transformations, but landscape impacts constituting a common and useful instrument of representation of identity and social agglutination [8].

Social movements with territorial and environmental claims have been increasingly seen as a common manifestation of social discontent around the planet. Several authors such as Subra in 2016 [9] give various reasons for this, such as a loss of prestige and legitimacy of the institutions and/or experts that promote, endorse, and design large projects that modify the environment and the landscape. Other authors, such as Nel.lo in 2003 [10], note that it is another consequence of the rescaling processes [6,11] that “fracture” the relationship between the territories that undergo the transformations, and where the profits produced return to.

Territorial conflicts have become increasingly common in Italy and Spain as their industrialization, service economy, urbanization, and the rise of the middle class has expanded and become established. Further to this last aspect, global data on environmental conflicts show a certain correlation between the number of mobilizations and the level of well-being and this is one of the reasons that environmentally-damaging activities are being relocated to the global south [12]. One explanation of this dynamic is that the sense of belonging has become an essential aspect of well-being and it causes people to react and mobilize. The loss of this sense of belonging can be traumatic, and there is evidence that it can have negative impacts on health [13].

Political Opportunity theory is undoubtedly useful in interpreting when mobilization takes place, and the results it obtains [14,15]. Moreover, in two developed regions undergoing an evolution towards more responsive and power-devolutionary democracies, the political “windows of opportunity” will tend to grow [16,17]. It is a bi-directional opportunity, from movements to political parties and institutions, and vice versa. As [18] highlights, the study of social movements needs to adopt a relational approach. In addition, the NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) concept is taken into account, as private interests are often seen as one of the main drivers of territorial defense movements [19,20].

Finally, resulting impacts are taken as a point of analysis. Both the short-term impacts on the form of social mobilization (support, public debate, visibility), and their long-term

environmental, territorial and political outcomes are considered. As a result, in face of the rich debate around the causal effect of social movements [18], the starting hypothesis agrees with the moderately optimistic perspective regarding the “conditional effect” [21] of mobilizations: concerning the considered cases, a counterfactual analysis regarding what would have happened without the social movements would show a significant loss of quality and heritage in the two areas studied. Such a perspective may be less-frequently examined and may even be relegated to the background [18], but eventually decisive. Firstly, because it is the essential “hallmark” for the social legitimation of mobilization. Secondly, because it can increase the possibility that movements and mobilizations can continue throughout decades of territorial transformation processes.

2.2. “Savingscapes” Methodology

This research is the result of knowledge acquired from previously published results [22], combined with the analysis of documentary archives (digital and printed) and specialist publications, complementary interviews of experts, and the inference of a tentative taxonomy of territorial mobilizations according to their outcome.

An original database was analyzed with 160 cases of environmental conflicts involving 155 movements in the region of Girona over a period of 50 years. Such a wide scope overcomes certain methodological limitations in the study of the impacts of social movements, including a small number of cases, a short timescale and a focus on large organizations [18]. Data sources used were common to most research in the field [18], online newspaper archive services, printed and digital archives of environmental organizations, and direct communication with activists. Among the four theoretical dimensions, impacts; outputs; outcomes; and consequences [18–22], we focused largely on the outputs and define four typologies, according to the resolution or current status of the environmental conflict. This research has employed the same approach (Figure 3). However, the absence of a similar database in Italy led the authors to identify relevant comparable cases for the study. Starting from the need to validate the taxonomy proposed for the case of Girona, the territorial context of Genoa was chosen; this parallel does not have the meaning of a “traditional” analysis of similarities and differences, but of a verification of the identified categories.

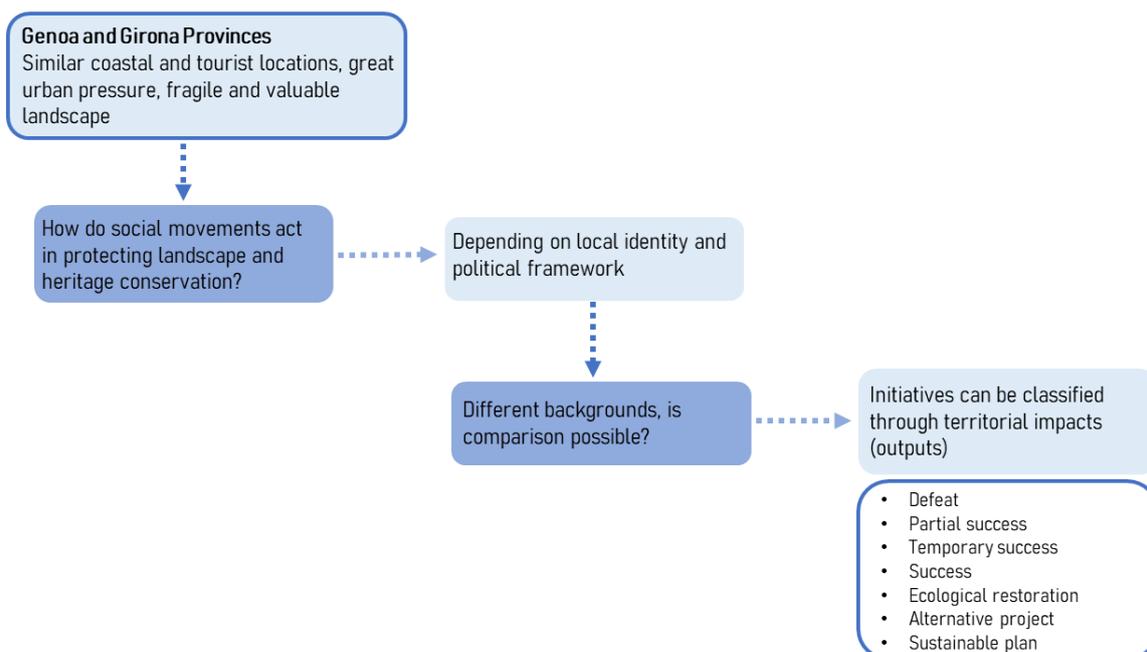


Figure 3. Case classification process flowchart (Authors).

As previously mentioned, the core aim of this research is to explore the role of civil society in shaping landscapes. This involves a deeper understanding of the impacts, in terms of territorial/environmental actions, political incidence, and societal shift. Compared to [22], a wider range of categories was inferred based on the different nature and evolving paths the conflicts took. This new, more detailed taxonomy sits on a spectrum that ranges from a worst-case scenario of the defeat of the mobilization, to the promotion of alternative projects, and even political prefiguration (Table 1). Such a wide range makes it possible to comprehend the importance of movements that arise from place attachment and/or environmental awareness in re-modelling local and regional landscapes, by generating a systematic way to integrate impacts, outputs, and outcomes. In fact, the taxonomy is rather like a Russian doll. The “Success” level states the main aim of territorial defense groups, which is to contain and impede impacts. Thenceforth, novel, more proactive notions of activism emerge that turn visions into practice, making the cultural heritage that society gains from environmentalism tangible. Hence, the impacts and consequences of territorial mobilizations are discussed from the perspective of how the social movements behind them have penetrated to the heart of territorial governance and development.

Table 1. Environmental and territorial conflicts—Impact categories. (Authors).

Defeat	Plan or project with impact on the environment, the landscape or cultural heritage, which, despite social opposition, was finally approved and carried out.
Partial Success	Project developed with significant changes due to social pressure, in order to reduce direct and indirect impact on environment and landscape.
Temporary Success	Plan or project facing social opposition that led to a tacit non-development, yet without being formally dropped. Negative public opinion, and successive delays in the approval procedure, often combined with external factors such as an upcoming election, or an economic crisis, led to the abandonment of the project.
Success	Socially rejected plan or project that did not take place due to an official mandate to halt it, from the relevant government or decision makers, or due to a court sentence. In some cases, the victory led to the establishment of a protected status for the affected feature/site/area.
	
Ecological Restoration	Area that, after suffering significant impacts and degradation from a previously existing activity or project, later underwent an ecological restoration initiative in response to bottom-up claims.
Alternative Project	Bottom-up and/or cross-sectoral sustainable initiatives, arising directly or indirectly from societal responses to threats against natural, cultural and environmental assets.
Sustainable Plan/Policy Prefiguration	Sustainable plan or policy resulting from the mobilization of civil society, after denouncing wide-ranging socioecological threats, unsustainable trends, and/or calls for specific policy-making or sustainable management practices.

In this sense, given the briefly introduced taxonomy, the proposed methodology needs to be implemented through the use of case studies. In particular, we therefore proceed with

the selection of territorial conflicts that have taken place in comparable contexts in order to validate the methodological approach of the research, as well as its transferability.

3. Application of Methodology: Cases Studies and Results

This section summarizes the characteristics of the two territories researched, in particular, those aspects concerning a general description of the province, detailing their local movements and planning tools (Figure 4).

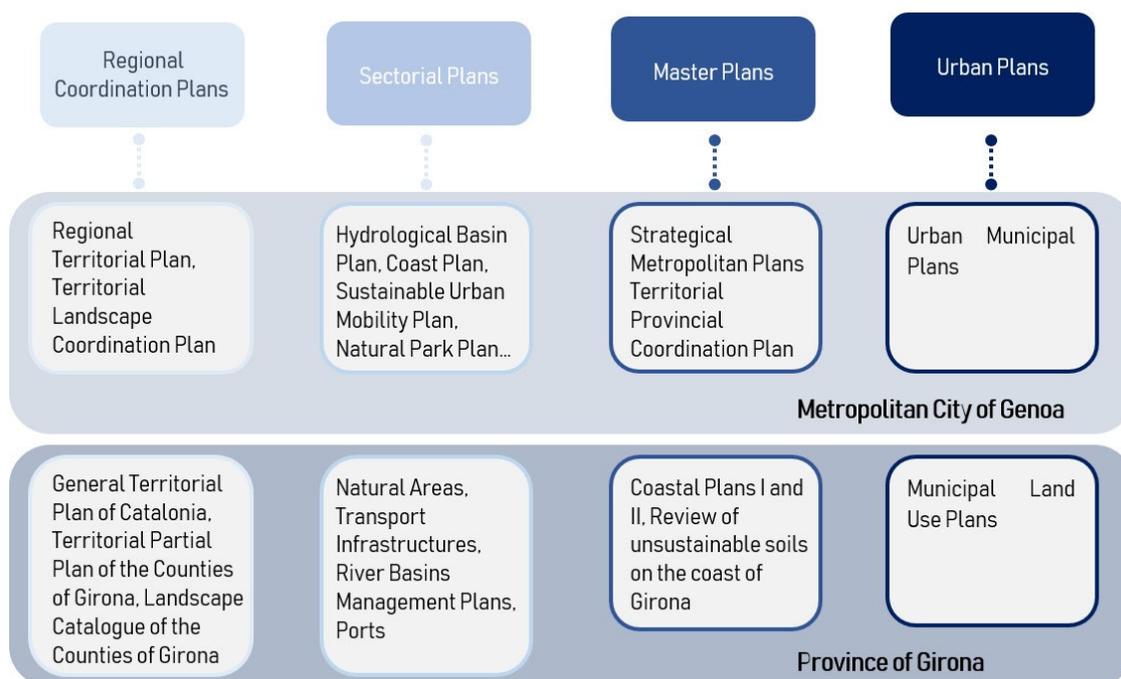


Figure 4. Case studies land planning framework.

3.1. Metropolitan City of Genoa (Italy)

Located in north-western Italy and facing the Mediterranean, the Metropolitan City of Genoa, has a population of over 812,000, across 67 municipalities, and an overall area of 1834 km²; it is the geographical, economical and urban center of Liguria. Nearly 75% of the area's population (one third of Ligurian inhabitants) live in the capital city, and many others work or study there. It is a highly strategic logistical and infrastructural hub, Italy's biggest port (and one of the most strategic in Europe), but it is also the main cultural center with a student population of 30,000 in the university and numerous international research centers.

In order to understand Genoa, it is necessary to refer to the geographical layout of Liguria. It is a thin strip of land linking the Alps and the Mediterranean, with a maximum width that does not exceeds 40 km. Mountains cover two-thirds of the region, and, apart from the shoreline, there are no lowlands, making only a small part of the region suitable for urbanization. This becomes clearer when looking at land-use in Liguria: only 6% is classified as urban. The economic activities of Genoa and its hinterland have traditionally centered on port traffic and industry; but since heavy industry collapsed in the 1970s, the port has undergone profound transformations, making Genoa one of the most important European logistic hubs. A long period of decline led to changes in the economical assets and tourism became an increasingly important resource.

The proximity of the mountains has always been seen as a barrier to development, feeding the common mentality that the transformation of natural areas foments economic activity, and the survival of the local community and its "know-how" [23]. Thus, social movements did not generally question the construction of heavy industry, but aimed to resolve the occasional conflicts that arose when the continual damage caused by the heavy

industry reached an unacceptable level, along with an increasing awareness of the impacts of such activities.

However, a profound recession in the 1980s, along with deep demographic changes, such as an aging population, immigration from non-European countries, increasing unemployment and social degradation in the suburbs and historical center, ignited a shift in the nature of mobilizations. A number of serious industrial and natural accidents between 1985 and 1995 (the explosion of an oil storage plant, Haven oil tanker disaster and several dramatic floods), caused a change in what people valued, from quantity (income, population, volume of trade), to quality (of work, living environment, social relations). Protests spread spontaneously as a result of political problems or local environmental emergencies, focusing on general aspects related to development choices and the role of the city itself. It was the birth of the “citizens’ committees”, increasingly approaching local administration with demands for improvements in the environmental quality of streets and residential areas.

Committees were quite small (7–30 activists), self-organized, formed of a mix of ex-political activists, teachers, retired housewives, and supported by employees, caregivers and blue-collar workers. The average age was between 45 and 65, and members’ education was middle to high. A common cultural trait, suggested by the members themselves, was “campanilismo”, (a “narrow focus”). Action was short-term, and often ended once answers or promises relating to the question were received. While numerous attempts have been made to organize and therefore coordinate the activity of committees, this has never been successful, despite their territorial proximity.

In accordance with this vision, the temporary “solution” to the environmental problems proposed by the mobilized actors was to institutionalize environmental risks, thus declaring the western area of Genoa an “area at high risk of environmental crisis”. This demand was rejected in March 1995 by the referring Minister. This decision had repercussions on the capacity for social and political aggregation that the local committees had developed for around a decade. Dozens of active committees were dissolved and attempts to set up a citizens’ coordination of environmental committees all failed. This fostered research into the “commitism” phenomenon, which traces two driving factors to the rapid development of such forms of mobilization [24]: the notable propensity of the Genoese community towards stable housing, resulting in a strong sense of local roots and identification with the neighbourhood and low standard of local politics. Local decision makers were accused of being unable to solve the problems of inhabitants through the usual participatory channels, and of providing little information about the state of the environment and related problems. Their desire to minimize risks to their careers by justifying policies that are anything but ecological was clear through their manipulation of data [24].

The Increase in “commitism” was in parallel with a more general process of societal environmental awareness at the national level, represented by environmental associations. While, until the early 1960s, only a small group of particularly enlightened people (scientists, intellectuals, biologists, or “rich people”) were aware of ecological problems, alongside historical conservation organizations such as Pro Natura and Italia Nostra, in the 1970s, ecological awareness became more widespread. Thus, a second generation of organizations arose (The World Wildlife Fund, FAI and later Legambiente, originally Lega per l’ambiente), their work merging political, technical-specialist, and educational commitments. As a result, militancy is now considered a ‘job’, a structured set of tasks that must be performed for results to be achieved. Simultaneously, according to authors such as Colombo in 1999 [25] there was a tangible increase in the environmental awareness of the population between the early 1980s and the end of the 1990s. However, interviews conducted in different decades [25–28] show a gap between the expectations held by citizens regarding the environment, and their ability to demonstrate real support through making specific choices.

In the last decades, despite the increasing willingness of citizens to support and listen to environmental associations, general problems (pessimism towards politics, uncertainty

about the future), and internal problems faced by the associations themselves (difficulty in replacing activists, decrease in emotional tension) hampered potential outcomes [25].

As already mentioned, the Ligurian landscape is very precious and fragile, with intensive urbanization and industrialization along the thin coastline. This local dynamic led planning legislation and tools to focus first on the protection of the natural landscape, biodiversity and historical heritage. This clashed with urban plans, which were often outdated, and only later updated and adapted to contemporary challenges.

Following a top-down and general-sectoral planning framework, land development and territorial assets are regulated by a Regional Plan (1997); a Landscape Coordination Plan (1990); Supra-local Plans (at a provincial or metropolitan scale); several sectoral plans; and urban plans for the 234 municipalities in the region. Nonetheless, actual planning first took place at the local scale after the National Law n° 1150/1942, even though many were only projects on paper for many years after the end of the Second World War. Reconstruction was rampant and unregulated, and led to high-density urbanization that had serious effects on fragile contexts, such as the coastline, where development was highly unsustainable and took no account of nature. The Ligurian landscape first formed part of planning with the 1991 LCP, the first such plan to be approved in Italy (ex-National Law n° 431/1985) and currently under review. The LCP sets specific rules to guarantee different degrees of conservation to different areas or features, according to their particular historical or natural importance.

From a sectoral perspective, one of the main fragilities of the Ligurian landscape is hydrogeological instability, due to its geographical and morphological structure, past uncontrolled coastal urbanization and, currently, climate change. Based on National Law n° 183/1989 introducing the Hydrographical Basin Plan, the Ligurian Basin Authorities produced 50 Plans. Many of these plans focused largely on hydrogeological aspects, thus ignoring the complex and systemic approach of the law to soil and water preservation, and offered only partial and temporary solutions. Regarding natural areas, while some parks have existed since the 1930s, the Parks and Reserves legislation at the national level was introduced in 1991 (National Law n° 394/1991). At present seven parks have been established.

In time, the focus on landscape protection and environment conservation in Ligurian planning, led to a freezing of the status-quo, which has resulted in the neglect of built-up areas inland where conservation did not take the form of regeneration projects [29]. Likewise, urban plans were often outdated and unable to cope with new challenges such as the aging population, sustainable development, and climate change. After a long process of regional decentralization, 1997 saw a general reform of urban planning in Liguria (Regional Law n° 36/1997). In order to adopt updated national legislation, new Municipal Urban Plans were established (PUC—Piano Urbanistico Comunale). Depending on regional peculiarities, PUCs paved the way for small greenfield intervention, thus enhancing the regeneration of brownfield areas.

3.2. Province of Girona

The province of Girona is located at the north-eastern tip of the Iberian Peninsula, within the autonomous community of Catalonia, and bordering France. With an area of 5910 km², and a population of 781,788 (2020), it is administratively organized into 221 municipalities. A brief summary of this territory can be based on five aspects. The first refers to an area marked by great natural and scenic diversity that combines coastal areas, the internationally famous Costa Brava, with high Pyrenean mountains and inland plains; highly fertile agricultural areas, and densely forested zones; medium-sized urban conurbations, and a multitude of small rural nuclei of medieval origin.

Two more elements are important in understanding the region. Its location is highly strategic, forming part of the main corridor between the Iberian Peninsula and the rest of Europe, and between the metropolitan area of Barcelona and the border. The diversity of landscape in Catalonia, along with its strategic location, meet in a very small geographical

area. The latter have shaped its social and cultural foundations, whether material or immaterial, whilst others, such as the presence of large logistical infrastructures and facilities, and national and international tourism have determined its economic model.

The third aspect to take into account is that the average standard of living is higher in Girona than in the rest of Catalonia, and that the region's economy has historically been both dynamic and diverse. However, recent decades have seen a growing trend towards specialization in services, public and commercial, and tourism and construction.

Although this characterization responds in many ways to a secular evolution, many contemporary dynamics were shaped in the second half of the twentieth century. An important economic aspect of the Franco dictatorship between the 1950s and 1970s was what was called "Desarrollismo" (developmentism). This was based on accelerated growth across the economy as a whole, but in particular, on the emerging importance of tourism as an economic motor. Likewise, many regional infrastructures were constructed, among them the Girona-Costa Brava airport (1967), and the motorway connecting Catalonia and France. This caused profound transformation to the landscape, whether in natural-rural environments, tourist destinations, or in urban and peri-urban areas [30]. As in many other places, what constituted an attraction for visitors was in turn a victim of its own "success".

As the dictatorship waned, the first environmental advocacy groups appeared in Girona, integrated in wider anti-Franco and pro-democracy movements. While there were few such movements in the 1970s, three had notable social and media repercussions: the "Costa Brava Debate", the campaigns for the protection of the Alt Empordà Wetlands, and the Volcanic Area of La Garrotxa. All three occurred between 1975 and 1976, and are significant and symbolic highlights of the fight against the destruction of the landscape that is mainly associated with the regime of Franco. In addition, these fights led also to the declaration of the two first regional Natural Parks in Catalonia (the Garrotxa Volcanic Area Park in 1982, and the Alt Empordà Wetlands in 1983), and were the origin of Girona's oldest environmentalist organizations. These have existed for some 30–40 years, and are the benchmark for the whole movement at a county or regional level, and include the *Associació de Naturalistes i Ecologistes de la Garrotxa*, 1978; *IAEDEN—Salvem l'Empordà*, 1980; the *Associació Naturalistes de Girona*, 1981; *LIMNOS—Pla de l'Estany*, 1987; and *ADEPAR*, now *Emys Foundation*, 1987.

The political changes of 1977–1980 led to democratic elections at national, regional, and local levels, which aroused great expectations. If speculation was a consequence of Francoism, then the disappearance of the regime should lead to the disappearance of the problem. Indeed, some leading figures of mobilizations found a new leading role in the nascent democracy, with urban planning among their most urgent priorities as an instrument to improve living conditions, social justice, and the protection of the territory. This led to an extraordinary planning effort during the 1980s and 1990s, and urban improvements were evident [31].

In the 1990s, following a boom in the construction sector (period that ended with a recession following the Olympic Games in Barcelona), it was realized that speculation was not only a mentality of the authoritarian regime, but a practice that acted on and influenced urban development under democracy as well. This triggered a new wave of environmental conflicts against housing projects and marinas, with a high impact on the territory in general and on valuable natural spaces in particular.

It was evident, then, that intense territorial transformation processes would continue in a region marked by real-estate economics, and a strategic geographical location within the Peninsula. It also became clear that awareness about the quality and value of the landscape was socially widespread.

A new growth cycle of unprecedented magnitude took place between 1998 and 2007 [32]. This gave rise, once again, to mobilizations and conflicts. Projects that had been abandoned in the previous crisis were reactivated, while new ones appeared that inspired the formation of multiple groups, often under the name "Save . . . [place]". Once more, this led to a political reaction. Since 2004, coinciding with the formation in Catalo-

nia of the first progressive government in twenty-five years, new urban, environmental and landscape management legislation has been passed; these were strongly influenced by European Union Directives and specific initiatives such as the European Landscape Convention (2000), which aimed to limit very occasionally and reverse the expansion of urbanization [33,34]. Paradoxically, this change of government and policies did not reduce the pressure of movements or conflicts. On the contrary, the period until 2010 was marked by a highly developed territorial dialectic. On one hand, it was a window of political opportunity, while, on the other the actions of the new government had an impact on deeply-rooted and socialized urban speculation [17,34].

Costa Brava is probably one of the most illustrative cases. It suffered accelerated development from the 1950s with real estate and tourism as economic motors that are still decisive sixty years later. After first mobilizations took place in the 1970s, despite the constitution of democratic institutions and some relevant cases of reformist planning [35], territorial conflicts and mobilizations have become a constant [22]. Tensions represent a particular form of territorial governance, a spatial “trialectics” between tourism/real estate interests, political authorities and social movements.

Focusing on the last two decades, environmental activism around Costa Brava has also been very active, with 2002 marking a turning point in the type of demands the organizations made. After listing several plans and projects that threatened a number of natural landmarks and the landscape of the Alt and Baix Empordà counties, IAEDEN—Salvem l’Empordà deployed a county-wide campaign demanding a regional Master Plan. The Catalan Government embraced the demand with background studies starting by the end of 2002 (Anuari Territorial, 2003), and the initial approval of the Plan in May 2004 (Anuari Territorial, 2004). The Master Plan initiated extensive planning policy at the Catalan level (Table 1), and included, among others, two Coastal System Urban Master Plans (2005), a Territorial Partial Plan and Landscape Catalogue (both 2010) for the whole of the Girona region. This new regional planning policy endorsed a renewed and more comprehensive vision of the territory, aimed at tackling planning failures embedded in local plans and insufficiently integrated environmental planning.

Parallel to this new land planning culture, the construction sector collapsed following the international financial crisis of 2008 [36]. Repeating the cyclical process of previous decades, in 2018 a new wave of second residence projects encroached on some of the remaining patches of coastal land. High-end developments for the international market, fed by global capital, spurred mobilizations all along the coast under the SOS Costa Brava campaign. This movement called for an Urban Master Plan that would adapt local plans to current sustainable urban development policies and regulations. Once again, the Catalan Government reacted, and the planning procedures started in January 2019. Among its first results were two development moratoriums that impeded projects seeking to evade the new planning regulation. In January 2021, the Costa Brava Urban Master Plan was finally approved, declassifying or reducing 142 areas were to have been the site of over 15,000 housing units.

Some distinctive features of the selected case-studies for both contexts are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Genoa and Girona Study Areas—Impact categories and cases’ description (Authors’ own).

Metropolitan City of Genoa	Province of Girona
Vado Ligure Gateway (Maersk Container Terminal) Port Container Platform built in Vado Ligure in 2019 Outcome: Environmental issues remain unsolved because of the absent local opposition.	Defeat The Very High Voltage power line (MAT) Cross-border Very High Voltage (400 kW) Power Line between Setmenat (Catalonia) and Baixàs (France), crossing several counties of Girona province. Outcome: The MAT case raised societal awareness of the energy system. Strategic European interests pushed for infrastructures, thus ignoring the impacts on society, the landscape and environment, as well as potential alternatives.

Table 2. Cont.

Metropolitan City of Genoa	Province of Girona
<p>Genoa Gronda A new highway (about 70 km) built in the western part of the city to ease its traffic congestion, separating urban vehicular traffic from freight transport. Outcome: The strong opposition of local and national organizations produced progressive changes to the original project and, finally, forced the Genoa Municipality to start a public debate to discuss alternatives reducing environmental and social impacts.</p>	<p>Partial Victory Camí de Ronda de Palamós Protests and appeals against the alteration of the coastal path in Palamós led to reduced impact and corrective measures Outcome: No specific outcomes beyond certain changes to the project itself.</p>
<p>Portofino Tunnel A new tunnel to link Rapallo, S. Margherita Ligure, and Portofino to enable easier access to the motorway (a specific route has yet to be defined) Outcome: Due to the impossibility to reach a compromise between stakeholders, local administrations and environmental activists, the project was postponed and traffic problems remain unsolved.</p>	<p>Temporary Victory/Abandoned Project C-32 motorway prolongation New road route between Palafròls and Lloret de Mar. Outcome: Court of Law suspended a project due to regional climate change legislation. A new socio-political context derived from the climate crisis, also fueled by the post-pandemic concept of One Health, is questioning projects such as the C-32 or Barcelona airport's runway extension.</p>
<p>ILVA Cornigliano Industry Plant One of the two main steel plants in Italy, located near the city center (in the Cornigliano neighborhood), which at one stage employed 7000 people, and produced 2 million tons of steel a year. Outcome: The constant pressure from workers, local inhabitants, and environmental associations, succeeded in closing the blast furnace; the industrial area was cleaned up, and jobs were protected.</p>	<p>Victory Castell beach protection Residential resort project in unspoiled beach resulted in protected natural area. Outcome: The Castell sentences set a legal precedent regarding the absence of economic compensations for the reclassification of land with natural values as non-urbanizable. However, payments above the market price were made by the Government of Catalonia to the owners, providing the latter with a substantial profit.</p>
<p>Pra' Port Buffer Following the construction of a new port container platform in the western part of Genoa (facing the Pra' and Voltri neighborhoods), this segment of the coastline was the object of a major regeneration and ecological restoration project to compensate for the negative impact of the new infrastructure on local communities. Outcome: The action of environmental associations and committees succeeded in gaining compensation for the negative impacts on the quality of life caused by this large-scale strategic infrastructure. Even though the project was inevitable, a compromise was reached, leading to high quality public space for leisure and sport activities that were previously inexistent.</p>	<p>Ecological Restoration La Pletera coastal wetlands Unfinished residential resort project on unspoiled beach resulted in restored coastal wetlands in a Natural Park. Outcome: A misguided land planning model from 50 years ago was corrected, once the destruction of the coastal wetlands had started. A large natural area within a Natural Park was established, that acts as a natural solution in face of the impacts of extreme weather and climate change, as shown in the floods caused by storm Gloria in 2020.</p>
<p>Carmagnani-Superba Area Two large oil plants, Carmagnani and Superba, located in a residential area (the Muledo neighborhood) in western Genoa. Outcome: The constant action of local associations and committees for environmental and human safety forced the Genoa Municipality to strengthen the proscription of such dangerous activities, thus making it more difficult for companies to act in this area. They now make a conscious decision to move to new areas, where oil can be more easily stored.</p>	<p>Alternative Project Som Energia (We Are Energy) In 2010, the first renewable energy cooperative of Spain was established in Girona. It is now the benchmark for a change in the energy model. Outcome: Som Energia has become the nursery for the democratization of the energy system in Spain as thousands of people have found an alternative to the conventional utilities dominating the market, showing the potential of the cooperative economy. The cooperative also offers training to address energy-related interests and needs. Several other cooperatives have since been founded.</p>
<p>Beigua Park A large nature reserve on the hills between the Genoa and Savona metropolitan areas, where titanium deposits were found. These have not yet been exploited, as ways to balance resource exploitation and sustainable development have to be agreed upon. Outcome: The limits imposed by nature reserves, and the opposition of environmental associations and local committees temporarily blocked the mining company's initiative. Following the consent of the Regional Administration, opposition was focused on restricting the company's action to simple scientific research, thus fighting further mining activities irreconcilable with land and nature preservation.</p>	<p>Sustainable Development Plan or Program Prefiguration Costa Brava Urban Director Plan Protests from the SOS Costa Brava platform triggered the development of a new regional plan stopping the building of over 15,000 potential housing units and excluding 1200 Ha of classified land from construction. Outcome: The Costa Brava Urban Master Plan marked a turning point in Catalonia's regional planning. Although the Government already had such plans on its agenda, no specific timeline had been established for their implementation. In 2022, an analogous plan is under preparation for the rest of the Catalan coast (except the Barcelona metropolitan area).</p>

4. Discussion and Conclusions

Considering outcomes and consequences of social mobilizations in Genoa and Girona, the impacts may have been diverse and spurious. Nonetheless, we can note some features common to both areas in the different forms that landscape modifications and socio-organizational systems have acquired.

These results are due to the intrinsically co-evolutionary character of the relationship between humans and the environment. In this context, social movements are the means through which society produces the resources necessary to influence the other actors in territorial governance processes, whether they are decision-makers, the media, academia, or other sectors of civil society [18].

Nowadays, outcomes of territorial mobilizations also take the form of new territorial narratives that are expressed in regulatory, policy-making, or planning initiatives. Therefore, social movements with an environmental/territorial focus become another actor in territorial development, capable of shaping landscapes in multiple dimensions: biophysical, conceptual-political and cultural-social.

As shown in the cases examined, the reality of environmental movements is increasingly complex and varied. It is a maturing process lasting several decades. We identify three periods of evolution: 1960–1980; 1980–2000; and 2000–the present, in which the demands, narrative and actions of territorial defense movements gain new layers of knowledge and vision. In the initial stages of the 1960–1970s, in parallel with a global environmental awakening (Stockholm Conference of 1972, publication of ‘The Limits to Growth’, etc.) it could have been thought that safeguarding nature was the main objective uniting everyone. Later on (1980–1990s), when local-scale and community engagement played a leading role in societal development (e.g., Local Agenda 21), demands from organized citizens shifted towards the quality of their habitat. In the final (and current) stage, activism is more strategic and proactively addresses sustainability (ecological restoration, alternative programs, sustainable plans and policies). A new cycle is predicted for the current decade, in which socio-ecological resilience will be the central issue, requiring even more complex interventions by the environmental movement (climate adaptation, degrowth, decision-making regarding trade-offs between energy transition and biodiversity conservation, etc.). In practice, each new period will continue to show features of the previous ones, as environmental conflicts are diverse and mobilizations tackle the issue from a multiplicity of visions, demands and interests; but in terms of territorial governance, the global evolutionary process is what we find relevant.

The relationships that the population of each city or territory has with its own sea, river, water, mountain, plain, etc. not only serve a functional value, but also a social and cultural one; they are an essential part of the *Genius loci*.

In this sense, we see how such a reading brings out the role of civil society in shaping landscapes in the two contexts. What emerges from the mobilizations demonstrates this precise interrelation of factors: not so much from an organizational perspective, but from their background, and the cultural outcome they propose.

- For the Genoese case, a land of limited space and insufficient agricultural resources, the exploitation of the territory has always played a role of primary importance: on the one hand it is an assurance of survival, on the other it is perennially threatened by an unstable equilibrium. Change has always been allowed, but very carefully: environmental sensitivity in the Genoese area has not acted to safeguard unspoiled natural resources, but should often be seen to be an alert of the risks resulting from excessive change, which often causes identity construction and also disappointment and resentment [27]. This is not due to a precise stance of the movements themselves, but to what has always been a “love/hate” relationship between the population and its geographical context. This is demonstrated by the lengthy Ligurian environmental planning tradition (one of the first, and most clearly defined in Italy), despite the massive change the landscape has been subject to.
- The case of Girona is, essentially, very much the same. The privileged location of the territory is its most important asset. It has enabled tourism to develop (including holiday homes), and is a highly favorable setting for industry and its related sectors, such as logistics; making it a source of socioeconomic progress. Furthermore, the landscape is a vital part of the cultural identity of its inhabitants, whether they are natives or newcomers. The landscape of Girona province is, it could be said, the other side of the coin to that of the Metropolitan City of Genoa. It is not a narrow stretch of land between steep mountains and the sea and it is a much wider mosaic of natural features and settlements. Despite such differences, the main reason why people in both areas come together and “fight” is the same; to prevent excessive change and its impact on the environment. Success in these environmental battles

becomes the primary ingredient for long-term engagement and the survival of the organizations. This, in turn, enables them to mature and better adapt to emerging socio-spatial challenges, and adopt more complex proposals and commitments.

In summary, after exploring a range of conflicts in the Genoa and Girona areas over a 50-year period, we conclude that territorial defense movements, whether in urban or polycentric territories, are decisive factors in sustainable territorial governance. The conflicts that such groups engage in add value to the decision-making processes and are vital in redrawing the limits of territorial development towards a revisionist-regenerationist scale of impacts. If the economic stakeholders are the only agents involved in formal development processes, there would no critical mass that forced public bodies to review or adapt them. Conflicts, such as that of the Gronda in Genoa, have shown the weakness of territorial governance, and the need for effective collaborative solutions to contentious development plans or, at a minimum, clear contingency plans to impede results that are detrimental to the environment.

We have also found that identity is a crucial driver of mobilization, and that place attachment (with a physical dimension that may be regional regarding territory and landscape) is one of its essential components. This means that conflicts will often depart from the NIMBY position, and that defeating a single plan that would have a negative impact on the environment is the tipping point between success or defeat of the mobilization. In territories that have undergone widespread and accelerated change since the 1950s, curbing any scale of new impacts is also a social demand for environmental justice and the right to a long-lasting sense of place. This, in turn, enhances the emotional and mental security and well-being associated with the feeling of recognizing “where we are (from)”.

Finally, this place attachment triggers a co-evolutionary process with the territory, which runs in parallel to, and is fed by, more global environmental challenges. The movements often develop new approaches over time, moving from the reactive to the proactive, that eventually forms the culture of sustainability of the area in question. Thus, successfully stopping a specific plan, program, legislation, or activity, leads the groups to assume more complex challenges, that include ecological restoration initiatives, alternative projects, or strategic sustainability policies. This demolishes the concept of a paternalistic government that takes care of society, and results in the strengthening of responsive and adaptive governance as the way in which to enforce the official sustainability paradigm in real life. The impacts of territorial defense movements are not only tangible, but very clearly cultural and societal.

The nature of the proposal of such a taxonomy codified by the authors should also be emphasized. In fact, this approach presupposes an inductive methodology that, starting from the analysis of a series of case studies, allowed the authors to formulate a possible classification. However, further research could focus instead on deepening the systematic approach proper to deductive methodologies.

For this reason, future lines of research will be able to explore how this type of analysis on movements and their activation is also pertinent to other contexts which, not necessarily must have such a marked landscape value, but which from different bases may or may not reach the same impacts. In this sense, the chronological reading of the mobilizations suggests that there are “invariant” motivations of the processes inherent in the conflicts with which the authors have dealt. At the same time, there are distinctly local characteristics which constitute peculiar triggers, but which could contribute to the strengthening of the proposed taxonomy.

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