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Review

The SDG Prosperity Cluster: Integrating Economic Dynamism, Social Equity, and Environmental Sustainability

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Abstract

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Prosperity Cluster (SDGs 7–11) represents a multidimensional framework linking economic growth, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and resilient development. This review critically examines the interconnections among Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9), Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), and Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11), with the aim of exploring how these goals collectively contribute to sustainable prosperity. Adopting a structured literature review methodology informed by PRISMA principles, the study synthesizes peer-reviewed and gray literature collected from major academic databases and institutional sources. The findings indicate that progress toward the prosperity-oriented SDGs remains uneven across regions due to disparities in governance quality, technological capacity, infrastructure development, and social inclusion. Renewable energy transitions, digital innovation, circular economy initiatives, green infrastructure, and sustainable urban planning emerge as critical drivers of long-term prosperity, while inequality, weak institutional coordination, inadequate human-capital investment, and uneven access to technology remain major barriers. The review further demonstrates that progress in one SDG strongly influences outcomes in others, emphasizing the importance of integrated and policy-coherent approaches rather than isolated sectoral actions. Conceptually, the paper advances the understanding of the "Prosperity Cluster" by positioning dynamism, equity, and environmental stewardship as mutually reinforcing dimensions of sustainable development. The study concludes that achieving sustainable prosperity requires governance systems capable of balancing economic competitiveness with environmental responsibility and social justice. Greater international cooperation, inclusive policymaking, and investment in resilient infrastructure and human capital are essential to ensure that prosperity benefits present and future generations without leaving vulnerable populations behind.

Keywords: sustainable development goals; prosperity; renewable energy; green technologies; economic equity; social inclusion

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1. Introduction

Achieving sustainable development remains one of the most urgent global priorities in the twenty-first century, particularly as countries continue to face interconnected economic, environmental and social challenges. Sustainable development was most prominently defined in the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) Brundtland Report as the "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" [1]. This definition established sustainability as a framework that integrates long-term environmental protection with economic progress and social well-being.

In response to growing global concerns regarding inequality, environmental degradation and economic instability, 193 United Nations member states adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development [2,3]. These goals aim to advance prosperity, environmental protection, social inclusion and institutional cooperation through integrated and universal policy frameworks. The SDGs are structured around the five core dimensions of People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership, emphasizing that sustainable development cannot be achieved through isolated sectoral interventions [4] and aim to raise growth and improvement in all countries, at a universal level, without leaving anyone behind, covering the environmental, social and economic pillars in a balanced manner [5,6]. Within this framework, SDGs 7–11 constitute the Prosperity dimension, reflecting the premise that sustainable prosperity emerges from the interaction of economic dynamism, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. This review adopts the UN classification as an analytical lens and contributes by examining the interconnections among SDGs 7–11 rather than assessing each goal independently [7]. By synthesizing evidence across energy systems, employment, innovation, inequality and urban sustainability, the study highlights how progress in one prosperity-related goal can reinforce or constrain progress in others.

Although the previous literature has examined individual SDGs extensively, comparatively fewer studies have explored the conceptual and practical interconnections among the "Prosperity" SDGs (7–11) as an integrated cluster. This study addresses that gap by examining how economic dynamism, social equity and environmental sustainability interact collectively within the Prosperity Cluster framework. Rather than treating these goals as separate development objectives, the paper conceptualizes SDGs 7–11 as a mutually reinforcing system in which progress or failure in one dimension directly influences outcomes in others.

The Prosperity Cluster includes SDGs (7–11) and, collectively, these goals seek to promote inclusive economic development, resilient infrastructure, technological advancement, equitable opportunities and environmentally sustainable urban systems. This clustering framework provides analytical value because it highlights the interdependence between economic modernization, social inclusion and environmental resilience, thereby offering a systems-oriented perspective on sustainable prosperity. These goals are fundamental for not only raising life standard to a higher level but also for ensuring that prosperity is shared broadly, considerably ensuring the achievement of reduced inequalities and minimizing environmental degradation [7].

Conceptually, the term "dynamism" within this paper refers to innovation-driven economic transformation, productive employment, technological advancement and infrastructure development. "Equity" refers to fair access to opportunities, resources, services and participation in economic and social systems. "Environment" refers to ecological sustainability, climate resilience and responsible resource management. The interaction among these dimensions forms the foundation of sustainable prosperity because economic

growth that excludes vulnerable populations or degrades environmental systems ultimately undermines long-term development stability.

1.1. SDG 7 "Affordable and Clean Energy"

SDG 7 seeks universal access to reliable, affordable and clean energy. Access to modern energy services supports social development because schools, healthcare facilities and businesses depend on stable electricity systems. Research demonstrates that renewable energy technologies, particularly solar and wind energy, have expanded significantly in recent years and are increasingly contributing to emissions reduction and energy diversification [8]. Studies also show that cleaner household energy sources improve public health outcomes by reducing indoor air pollution and respiratory diseases. Beyond technological deployment, the literature increasingly emphasizes that successful energy transitions depend on governance quality, financing mechanisms and institutional coordination. Unequal access to investment, infrastructure and policy support has contributed to uneven global progress toward SDG 7, particularly across developing regions [8,9]. This demonstrates that clean energy transitions are not solely technological processes, but socio-economic transformations requiring integrated planning and inclusive governance systems.

1.2. SDG 8 "Decent Work and Economic Growth"

SDG 8 focuses on promoting inclusive economic growth, productive employment and decent working conditions. Existing research shows that workforce development, digital skills and green employment sectors are increasingly important for adapting labor markets to technological and environmental transitions [10]. Decent work contributes to social stability because stable employment, legal protections and fair wages improve living conditions and reduce vulnerability.

However, the literature also demonstrates important tensions within SDG 8 implementation. While digitalization and green transitions create new economic opportunities, they can simultaneously increase labor precarity, skills inequalities and employment displacement when institutional protections are weak [9]. This suggests that sustainable economic growth requires balancing productivity and competitiveness with social protection and long-term workforce inclusion.

1.3. SDG 9 "Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure"

SDG 9 emphasizes resilient infrastructure, inclusive industrialization and technological innovation. Infrastructure systems, digital connectivity and research capacity strongly influence national productivity and long-term development trajectories. Studies show that countries investing in technological innovation, industrial modernization and research systems are generally more capable of transitioning toward sustainable production systems [11].

At the same time, the literature highlights substantial disparities in innovation capacity between developed and developing regions. Technological monopolization, unequal access to research funding and institutional weaknesses often limit the ability of lower-income countries to fully participate in sustainable industrial transitions. Consequently, SDG 9 is closely linked to broader questions of equity, governance and international development cooperation [9].

1.4. SDG 10 "Reduced Inequalities"

SDG 10 addresses inequalities in income, opportunity, social participation and access to services. Research consistently demonstrates that inequality emerges through uneven access to healthcare, education, employment opportunities and institutional representa-

tion [12]. Studies emphasize that reducing inequalities requires inclusive public policies, effective social protection systems and equitable institutional frameworks [9].

Importantly, inequality also shapes the effectiveness of progress across other Prosperity SDGs. Technological innovation, renewable energy transitions and urban modernization frequently benefit already advantaged populations more rapidly than marginalized groups. As a result, economic growth and innovation alone do not automatically produce inclusive prosperity unless accompanied by redistributive and participatory governance mechanisms.

1.5. SDG 11 "Sustainable Cities and Communities"

SDG 11 seeks to create inclusive, resilient and sustainable urban environments. Urban centers generate substantial economic activity but also concentrate environmental pressures, housing shortages and infrastructure challenges. Research highlights the importance of affordable housing, sustainable transport systems and integrated urban planning approaches that balance economic, environmental and social priorities [13].

Recent scholarship further demonstrates that sustainable cities require more than technological "smart city" solutions. Effective urban sustainability depends heavily on governance quality, public participation, equitable service distribution and long-term environmental planning. Consequently, SDG 11 operates as a convergence point where issues related to energy, inequality, infrastructure and economic development intersect simultaneously [14].

1.6. Major Challenges of SDGs 7–11

Despite increasing global commitment toward the Prosperity SDGs (7–11), progress across these goals remains uneven and constrained by a series of interconnected structural, institutional, economic, and environmental challenges. A recurring pattern throughout the literature is that barriers affecting one SDG frequently undermine progress in others, demonstrating the deeply interdependent nature of the Prosperity Cluster. Rather than functioning as isolated policy domains, SDGs 7–11 operate as a connected system in which weaknesses in governance, financing, inequality, and climate resilience generate cascading effects across multiple dimensions of sustainable development.

One of the most persistent challenges relates to unequal access to clean and affordable energy under SDG 7. Although renewable energy technologies such as solar and wind power have expanded rapidly in recent years, significant disparities remain between and within countries. Developing regions continue to experience energy poverty due to inadequate infrastructure, weak institutional capacity, political instability, and limited investment in modern energy systems [8,15]. The literature consistently shows that technological availability alone does not guarantee equitable energy access. Instead, effective governance frameworks, stable financing mechanisms, and long-term policy coordination are necessary to ensure that renewable energy transitions reach underserved and marginalized populations. This uneven distribution of clean energy infrastructure illustrates how environmental innovation can unintentionally reinforce existing inequalities when implementation lacks inclusivity.

Challenges associated with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) similarly reflect tensions between economic expansion and social sustainability. While digitalization, automation, and green economic transitions have generated new employment opportunities, these changes have also disrupted traditional labor markets and widened skills gaps in many countries [10]. Informal employment, precarious working conditions, and unequal access to education and vocational training continue to prevent large segments of society from benefiting fully from economic growth [9]. The literature further suggests

that growth models focused primarily on productivity and competitiveness often neglect labor protections and social wellbeing, creating forms of economic development that are quantitatively strong yet socially fragile. Consequently, progress toward SDG 8 depends not only on economic performance but also on inclusive labor policies, workforce reskilling, and social protection systems capable of supporting workers through technological and environmental transitions.

For SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), one of the central obstacles identified across the literature is the unequal global distribution of technological capacity and innovation systems. High-income countries generally possess stronger research institutions, digital infrastructure, and financial resources, allowing them to lead in industrial modernization and sustainable innovation [11]. In contrast, many developing economies continue to struggle with outdated infrastructure, weak connectivity, insufficient R&D investment, and limited institutional coordination. These disparities restrict opportunities for industrial diversification and reduce the ability of lower-income regions to participate competitively in emerging green and digital economies. The findings collectively indicate that innovation-driven growth cannot be sustained without parallel investments in education, governance quality, and human capital development. Furthermore, weak governance and fragmented policy implementation frequently reduce the effectiveness of infrastructure investments, particularly where long-term planning and institutional accountability are lacking.

Inequality itself, addressed explicitly under SDG 10, emerges throughout the literature as one of the most significant barriers to achieving sustainable prosperity. Importantly, inequality extends beyond income disparities and includes unequal access to healthcare, education, digital technologies, political participation, and economic opportunities [12,16]. A major contradiction identified across the reviewed studies is that technological advancement and economic growth often disproportionately benefit already advantaged populations, while marginalized communities remain excluded from emerging opportunities. This is particularly visible in the digital economy, where unequal internet access and technological literacy reinforce existing social and economic divisions. The evidence therefore suggests that innovation and globalization, while capable of accelerating development, can simultaneously deepen structural inequalities if not accompanied by redistributive and inclusive policy measures. As several scholars argue, reducing inequality requires not only economic redistribution but also institutional reforms that strengthen participation, representation, and social inclusion [9].

Urbanization presents another major challenge within the Prosperity Cluster, particularly under SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). Rapid urban growth has intensified pressure on housing systems, transportation networks, public services, and environmental resources in many cities worldwide. Research shows that urban sustainability efforts are frequently constrained by fragmented governance systems, inadequate funding, weak planning coordination, and unequal access to infrastructure [13,14]. In many contexts, smart-city initiatives and technologically advanced urban projects have produced uneven outcomes because they prioritize efficiency and innovation without adequately addressing affordability, social equity, and community participation. This reveals an important tension within sustainable urban development: technological modernization alone cannot create inclusive cities unless governance structures actively integrate the needs of vulnerable populations. Housing shortages, informal settlements, environmental degradation, and climate vulnerability continue to disproportionately affect lower-income urban communities, highlighting the social dimension of urban sustainability challenges.

Climate change functions as a cross-cutting challenge that intensifies vulnerabilities across all five prosperity goals. Rising temperatures, resource depletion, biodiversity loss, and increasingly frequent extreme weather events place growing pressure on infrastructure

systems, labor markets, energy security, and urban resilience [9]. The literature repeatedly emphasizes that climate-related disruptions disproportionately affect poorer populations and developing regions, further widening existing inequalities and undermining development gains. This creates a cyclical relationship in which environmental instability weakens economic and social systems, while inadequate governance and inequality reduce societies' ability to adapt effectively to climate risks. Consequently, climate resilience must be integrated into all dimensions of prosperity-oriented policymaking rather than treated as a separate environmental issue.

A major analytical insight emerging from the reviewed literature is that the challenges affecting SDGs 7–11 are deeply interconnected rather than independent. Weak governance structures can simultaneously undermine energy transitions, industrial innovation, labor protections, and sustainable urban planning. Similarly, inequality restricts access to education, digital technologies, clean energy, and economic opportunities, thereby slowing progress across multiple SDGs simultaneously. The findings therefore reinforce the argument that prosperity should not be understood solely in terms of economic growth, but rather as a balanced interaction between economic dynamism, social equity, and environmental sustainability.

Overall, the evidence demonstrates that achieving the Prosperity SDGs requires integrated and coordinated policy approaches capable of addressing structural inequalities, institutional fragmentation, and environmental vulnerability simultaneously. Progress remains uneven not because individual technologies or policies are absent, but because sustainable development depends on the alignment of governance systems, financial resources, social inclusion, and environmental resilience. This interconnectedness forms the central rationale for treating SDGs 7–11 as a unified "Prosperity Cluster," where advancement in one domain is fundamentally dependent on progress in the others.

Figure 1 illustrates the clustering structure of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and highlights the position of SDGs 7–11 within the broader "Prosperity" category. The figure emphasizes that the prosperity goals are not isolated objectives but interconnected dimensions of sustainable development that collectively influence economic growth, social wellbeing, and environmental sustainability. By grouping these SDGs together, the framework demonstrates how energy systems, employment, industrial innovation, inequality reduction, and sustainable urbanization interact to shape long-term prosperity outcomes.

Figure 2 further conceptualizes sustainable development through the interaction of its three foundational pillars: economy, society, and environment. The figure reinforces the central argument of this study that sustainable prosperity emerges only when economic dynamism, social equity, and environmental protection are pursued simultaneously and in a balanced manner [17]. In alignment with the United Nations 2030 Agenda, the figure demonstrates that progress toward the Prosperity SDGs requires integrated approaches capable of addressing environmental resilience, inclusive growth, and social inclusion collectively rather than independently [18].

Although this review focuses specifically on the Prosperity cluster (SDGs 7–11), Figure 2 also situates these goals within the broader sustainable development framework. The complete set of 17 SDGs spans the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainability, with many goals contributing simultaneously to multiple dimensions. The Prosperity cluster occupies a particularly important position because it intersects all three dimensions: SDG 7 contributes primarily to environmental sustainability while supporting economic development; SDGs 8 and 9 are strongly linked to economic transformation; SDG 10 addresses social equity; and SDG 11 integrates environmental, social and economic

objectives within urban systems. This multidimensional positioning reinforces the rationale for examining SDGs 7–11 collectively rather than as isolated goals.

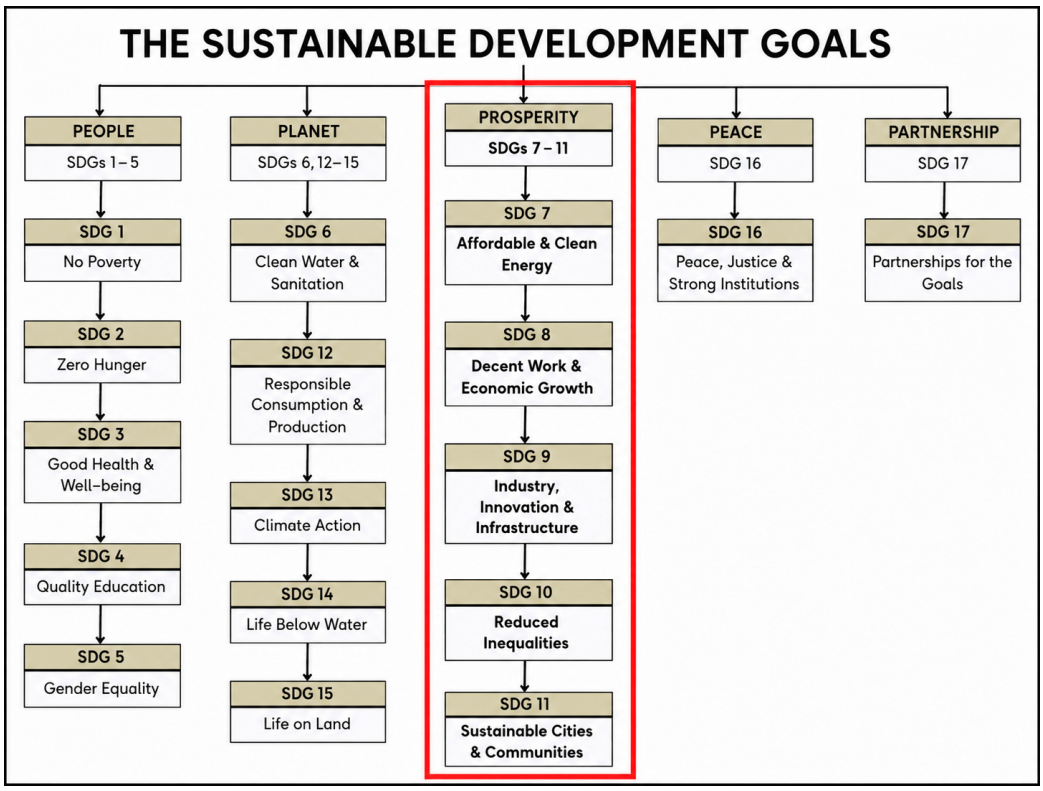


Figure 1. The UN Sustainable Development Goals Clusters.

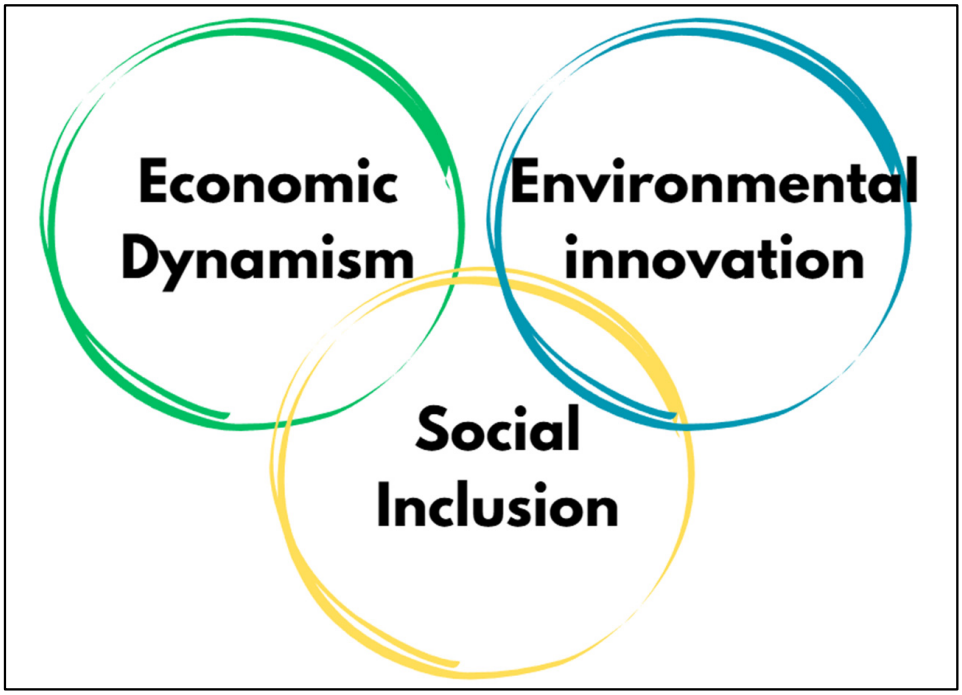


Figure 2. The three crucial elements of sustainable development [17].

1.7. Aims and Objectives

This paper aims to systematically examine how prosperity can be achieved through the integrated advancement of inclusive economic growth, clean energy transitions and

sustainable urban development. Drawing on the existing literature, the study situates these objectives within the broader framework of sustainable development, emphasizing the need to balance its three core pillars: economic dynamism, social inclusion and environmental innovation.

In particular, the paper focuses on the role of selected SDGs within the "prosperity" cluster, analyzing how their implementation contributes to achieving long-term, equitable, and sustainable prosperity. Beyond assessing their potential benefits, this study critically evaluates the practical, structural and policy-related challenges associated with the implementation of these SDGs across different contexts.

To provide a comprehensive and analytically rigorous perspective, each of the identified SDGs is examined in depth, with attention to both their individual contributions and their interlinkages with other goals within the SDG framework. This integrative approach allows for a deeper understanding of how coordinated progress across multiple domains is essential for fostering resilient, inclusive, and sustainable societies, ultimately supporting the well-being of both present and future generations.

This review aims to contribute to the sustainable development literature by examining SDGs 7–11 as an interconnected Prosperity Cluster rather than as a collection of individual goals. While previous studies have often focused on specific SDGs or selected SDG interactions, the present study synthesizes evidence across energy systems, employment, innovation, inequality, and urban development to explore how these dimensions collectively shape sustainable prosperity. By framing prosperity through the interacting lenses of economic dynamism, social equity, and environmental stewardship, the review highlights synergies, trade-offs, and governance challenges that may be overlooked in sector-specific analyses. This integrated perspective provides a broader understanding of the conditions required to achieve inclusive and sustainable prosperity within the 2030 Agenda framework.

2. Methodology

This study adopted a semi-systematic literature review design intended to synthesize interdisciplinary research relating to the Prosperity SDGs (7–11). A semi-systematic approach was selected because the topic spans multiple disciplines, including sustainability studies, environmental governance, economics, urban planning and innovation policy, making a fully quantitative systematic review less appropriate for capturing conceptual interconnections and policy-oriented insights [19].

2.1. Literature Search Strategy

The review methodology was informed by established evidence-synthesis frameworks commonly used in sustainability and social-science research [19–21]. These frameworks emphasize transparency, reproducibility and systematic documentation throughout the review process. In particular, the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) approach was adopted to improve transparency in study identification, screening and selection.

A comprehensive literature search was conducted using Scopus, Web of Science and PubMed due to their extensive coverage of peer-reviewed interdisciplinary research. Google Scholar was additionally used as a supplementary database to reduce indexing bias and identify relevant studies omitted from primary databases.

The search process was conducted between January and March 2026. Priority was given to literature published between 2015 and 2025 in order to capture scholarship emerging after the adoption of the SDGs in 2015. Earlier foundational studies were included selectively where conceptually relevant.

Search terms included combinations of:

- "SDG Prosperity Cluster"
- "sustainable development goals 7–11"
- "renewable energy"
- "inclusive growth"
- "innovation and infrastructure"
- "reduced inequalities"
- "sustainable cities"
- "green growth"
- "environmental governance"
- "sustainability transitions"

Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) were applied systematically to refine search outputs.

2.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Studies were included if they:

- focused on one or more Prosperity SDGs (7–11),
- examined economic, environmental or social sustainability dimensions,
- provided empirical, conceptual or policy-relevant findings,
- were published in English.

Studies were excluded if they:

- lacked relevance to the Prosperity SDGs,
- were duplicate records,
- lacked sufficient methodological transparency,
- were opinion-based without analytical support.

To strengthen methodological transparency and reproducibility, the study selection procedure followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework [20].

The initial search across Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, and Google Scholar identified 764 records. After the removal of 144 duplicate records, 620 studies remained for title and abstract screening. During this stage, 388 records were excluded because they did not sufficiently relate to the prosperity SDG cluster or the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainable development. Consequently, 232 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility. Following detailed full-text evaluation, 142 studies were excluded due to insufficient methodological quality, lack of direct relevance to the research objectives, or inadequate analytical contribution. Ultimately, 90 peer-reviewed and gray literature sources were retained for the final qualitative synthesis. For transparency and consistency with PRISMA reporting recommendations, all included studies retained after the eligibility assessment are listed and classified according to their primary SDG focus in Supplementary Table S1.

Figure 3 presents the complete PRISMA flow diagram used in the screening and selection process and outlines the sequential stages of database identification, duplicate removal, title and abstract screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion of studies [20]. Incorporating a PRISMA-informed reporting structure enhances methodological transparency, strengthens reproducibility, and clarifies how the final body of literature was systematically selected for analysis.

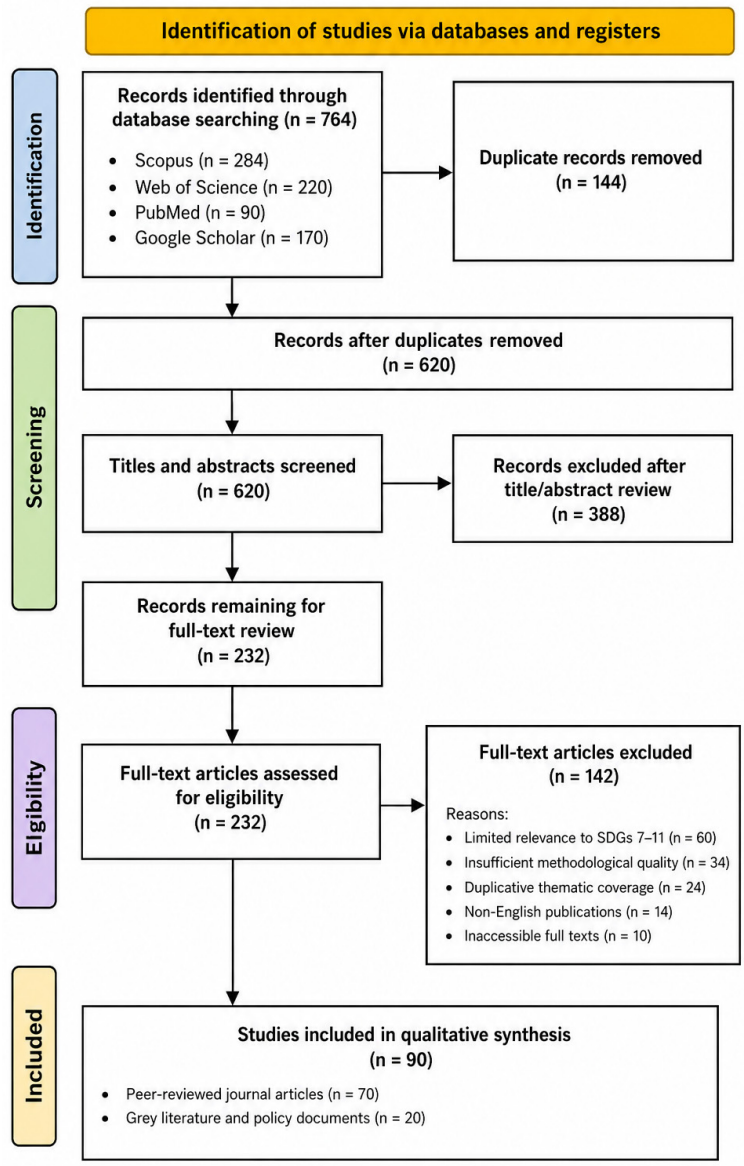


Figure 3. PRISMA-style flow diagram of the literature identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion process.

2.3. Quality Appraisal

Quality assessment procedures were guided by recommendations for integrative and systematic literature reviews proposed by [19,20,22], ensuring that both peer-reviewed and gray literature were evaluated according to relevance, methodological rigor and contribution to the review objectives.

To improve methodological rigor and transparency, all selected sources were subjected to a qualitative appraisal process. Peer-reviewed articles were evaluated based on methodological clarity, analytical relevance, citation impact and contribution to SDG-related scholarship. Gray literature sources were assessed according to institutional credibility, transparency of data sources and policy relevance.

Rather than applying a numerical scoring instrument, the review employed thematic quality assessment consistent with semi-systematic review approaches commonly used in interdisciplinary sustainability research [19].

2.4. Data Synthesis and Thematic Coding

Selected studies were categorized according to their primary contribution to:

- economic sustainability,
- environmental sustainability,
- social inclusion,
- governance and institutional systems,
- technological and innovation transitions.

A thematic synthesis method was applied to identify recurring patterns, tensions, governance challenges and conceptual linkages across the literature. Rather than summarizing studies individually, the review focused on identifying cross-cutting themes related to prosperity, inequality, governance, innovation and environmental resilience. Reference management and citation organization were conducted using EndNote 20 software.

2.5. Review Rigor and Limitations

A key strength of this review lies in its integrative and interdisciplinary perspective. The study critically synthesizes peer-reviewed and policy-oriented literature to examine how economic, environmental and social dimensions interact within the Prosperity SDG cluster.

As stated above, this study adopts a structured critical literature review approach informed by PRISMA principles (a Supplementary Table S2 -PRISMA checklist- has been provided, as well) rather than a full systematic review. While systematic procedures were employed to enhance transparency, including predefined search strategies, eligibility criteria, screening procedures, and documentation of the study selection process, the review also incorporates interpretive synthesis and critical analysis of both peer-reviewed and gray literature. This approach was considered appropriate given the broad and interdisciplinary nature of the SDG Prosperity Cluster (SDGs 7–11), which spans multiple sectors, policy domains, and sustainability dimensions.

However, several limitations should be acknowledged. The review relied exclusively on English-language sources, which may have excluded region-specific scholarship published in other languages. In addition, because the study adopted a semi-systematic rather than fully systematic design, some interpretive subjectivity may remain in thematic categorization and synthesis. Nevertheless, transparency measures, explicit inclusion criteria and critical source appraisal were implemented to strengthen analytical rigor and reproducibility.

3. Results and Discussions

The reviewed literature demonstrates that the SDG Prosperity Cluster (SDGs 7–11) functions as an interconnected system rather than a set of isolated policy goals. Across the studies examined, three recurring dimensions consistently emerge: economic dynamism, social equity and environmental sustainability. These dimensions interact through reinforcing synergies and, in some cases, conflicting trade-offs. This integrative perspective addresses an important gap in existing SDG literature, where goals are frequently analyzed independently despite their strong interdependencies [23].

The findings indicate that economic modernization alone is insufficient for achieving sustainable prosperity. Technological innovation and industrial expansion often improve productivity and competitiveness, yet these gains are unevenly distributed when social protection systems and inclusive governance mechanisms remain weak. Similarly, environmental initiatives such as renewable energy transitions and smart-city programs can generate positive sustainability outcomes while simultaneously reproducing inequalities if access to benefits is uneven. This explains why progress across SDGs remains highly uneven between countries and regions despite broad international commitment to the 2030 Agenda.

Another major pattern emerging from the review is that institutional quality strongly determines SDG implementation outcomes. Countries with stable governance systems, long-term planning capacity, inclusive welfare institutions and investment in education generally perform better across the prosperity goals. By contrast, fragmented governance, weak regulatory systems, political instability and inadequate financing repeatedly appear as barriers preventing coordinated progress across SDGs 7–11.

The literature also reveals important contradictions within sustainability transitions. Digitalization and automation can create new economic opportunities while simultaneously displacing vulnerable workers. Urban densification can improve efficiency and reduce emissions while also intensifying housing inequality and social exclusion. Renewable energy deployment may reduce greenhouse gas emissions while remaining inaccessible to marginalized populations due to affordability constraints. These findings demonstrate that sustainable prosperity requires integrated governance approaches capable of balancing economic, environmental and social objectives simultaneously.

Overall, the evidence suggests that the Prosperity Cluster provides analytical value because it highlights the systemic relationships between growth, inclusion, infrastructure, innovation and environmental transition. Rather than treating SDGs as separate policy targets, the cluster framework demonstrates how long-term prosperity depends on coordination across multiple sectors and institutions.

3.1. Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 7

As discussed earlier, SDG 7 emphasizes universal access to affordable and clean energy and advocates for investments in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology by the year of 2023 [24–26]. In accordance with this, the advancing in renewables is being shown continuously to deliver the environmental, economic and social dividends to support productivity, jobs and the resilience while expanding universal access to them [27,28].

According to Kumar and Rathore [29]'s study, there are many different types of renewable energy sources like wind energy that is more effective environmentally and economically due to its ability to minimize cost and climate change, geothermal energy due to its availability, consistency, and low installation and operating costs. These are able to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions across electricity, industry, transport and agriculture as well as buildings [29,30]. Solar, biomass, tidal, and hydropower technologies also serve as important alternatives to decouple our reliance on destructive non-renewable energies, and which are also in the line of pathways to limit the warming of the planet to 1.5 °C [29,31]. However, some of the challenges and obstacles that come with the utilization of renewable energy as mentioned by Makedon, Politykin, Hromyak, Novosad and Doronina [27] is the low accessibility and expansion of centralized energy supply across multiple countries, especially the developing ones, and their use requires major investments, necessitates developed infrastructure in order for the renewable energy to be joined into energy systems, and needs stability in aspects like politics in countries as instability may stand in the way of transitioning to clean energy, and decrease the pace of the process.

A major pattern emerging from the reviewed literature is that renewable energy transitions create simultaneous economic, environmental and social benefits when supported by strong governance and infrastructure systems. Studies repeatedly show that renewable energy expansion stimulates employment creation, improves energy security and reduces environmental degradation. However, the literature also highlights significant inequalities in the distribution of these benefits. Many developing countries continue to experience energy poverty despite global advances in renewable technologies, primarily because of

financing constraints, institutional weaknesses and limited grid infrastructure [27]. This uneven implementation explains why SDG 7 progress remains geographically inconsistent.

Moreover, according to Dada and Mbohwa [32], there are countless Municipal Solid Waste landfill sites that are home to a variety of different types of wastes, coming from different sources like agricultural, domestic, commercial, and construction places, which can be converted into energy. Therefore, Okuh, Nwulu, Ogu, Egbumokei, Dienagha and Digitemie [33] constructed a sustainable waste to energy model, that takes into consideration the three social, environmental, and economic pillars of sustainability, where environmental issues are minimized through the integration of advanced technologies as well as artificial intelligence (AI) for process optimization and innovative filtration systems, improving energy security by using waste as a renewable source, decreasing the reliance on fossil fuels.

Using renewable energy, implementing waste to energy systems, green buildings with efficiency and digitalization are huge actions towards reaching affordable and clean energy and achieving the 7th sustainable development goal, taking advantage of infinite energies, digital technologies, waste, and green buildings to mitigate drastic environmental issues like climate change, takes us closer to achieving prosperity.

The reviewed studies collectively demonstrate that achieving SDG 7 requires more than technological deployment alone. Successful implementation depends on long-term institutional planning, stable political systems, financial accessibility and policy coordination capable of integrating environmental and social priorities. This finding reinforces the broader argument of the present review that prosperity emerges through interconnected governance systems rather than isolated technical interventions.

3.2. Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 8

The research examined collectively indicates that progress toward SDG 8 is moving forward, although in ways that reveal strong differences across countries, sectors, and institutional systems. Carlsen [34]'s work on the European Union shows this clearly. Some member states have made meaningful improvements in productivity, youth employment, and job stability, while others continue to face stagnation due to long-standing structural challenges. These problems include weak labor protections, slow adoption of technological innovation, and limited investment in building workforce skills. Carlsen's findings highlight that even within a closely integrated region, the advancement of SDG 8 varies significantly depending on national circumstances. This perspective aligns with the argument presented by Kreinin and Aigner [18], who suggest that economic growth on its own cannot be taken as a reliable indication of decent work, particularly as environmental pressures intensify. They call for a rethinking of SDG 8 that places greater emphasis on sustainable work systems that support both human wellbeing and environmental responsibility.

Technological change appears frequently across the literature, and it is portrayed as both an opportunity and a potential source of new inequalities. For instance, studies on the expansion of fifth generation communication networks show that improved connectivity can generate employment in digital services, support entrepreneurship in rural areas, and increase communication efficiency. However, these benefits depend entirely on the availability of digital training and literacy initiatives. Without these supports, the same technologies risk widening existing gaps in skills and opportunities [35]. Di Vaio, Zaffar and Chhabra [36] develop this idea further by emphasizing the importance of intellectual capital during green transitions. Their findings show that organizations that invest in knowledge systems, employee development, and long term strategic planning are better positioned to generate sustainable employment in decarbonizing economies. This suggests that technological progress is most effective when accompanied by a strong culture of learning and innovation inside organizations.

Another area where the literature shows agreement is the role played by cooperatives and community centered economic models. Unlike profit oriented enterprises that often expose workers to instability during economic fluctuations, cooperatives typically offer a fairer distribution of economic benefits and provide stronger employment security. Siedlok, Callagher and Korber [37] show that cooperatives can promote stable employment not only in high income nations but also in developing economies where informal work is widespread. Hernández-Trasobares and Murillo-Luna [38] similarly demonstrate that cooperative structures can support job creation when decision making is collaborative and oriented toward community needs. These findings are reinforced by Klimczuk, Dovie, Kerla, Klimczuk-Kochańska and Toczyski [39], whose sociological analysis points to the importance of social protection, participatory labor systems, and inclusion if progress toward SDG 8 is to be achieved by the 2030 target. Together, these studies suggest that cooperatives provide a promising pathway toward fair and resilient labor markets, especially in contexts undergoing rapid social and technological changes.

A broader global view shows that countries differ significantly in how they navigate transitions to greener and more digitally oriented economic systems. The Indonesian case study offers an illustrative example. As the country expands its commitment to decarbonization, emerging sectors such as renewable energy and sustainable manufacturing have created new employment opportunities [40]. At the same time, these developments have contributed to disruptions in carbon intensive industries that previously supported large numbers of low skilled workers. This situation shows the importance of policies that support workers who may be displaced by new sustainability focused transitions. Çolak [41] research on OECD countries adds another perspective by examining rates of young people who are neither in employment nor in education or training. His findings indicate that countries performing strongly across multiple SDGs, especially those involving education and welfare, tend to have lower rates of youth detachment from work and study. This demonstrates that the achievement of SDG 8 is closely connected to progress in other areas such as education and social equity.

Policy frameworks and international guidance also influence the direction of SDG 8. Küfeoğlu [42] argues that new technologies can significantly improve labor markets, but only if governments anticipate their potential disruptive effects. This is increasingly important as automation and digital work platforms become more common.

Across all reviewed studies, several key insights emerge. Firstly, improvements in employment quality and access to opportunities are evident, but progress remains uneven and strongly shaped by national policy direction and institutional capacity [34,41]. Secondly, digital transformation and decarbonization create new forms of employment but at the same time disrupt existing labor structures, which makes investment in skills and innovation systems essential [35,36]. Third, cooperatives and community centered economic models appear particularly effective in promoting inclusive and secure employment [37,38]. Fourth, the achievement of SDG 8 requires moving beyond traditional ideas about economic growth and adopting perspectives that emphasize wellbeing, social protection, and environmental sustainability [39].

An important analytical pattern identified across the literature is the tension between economic modernization and labor market stability. While green transitions and digitalization create new employment sectors, they also disrupt traditional industries and disproportionately affect vulnerable workers. This contradiction demonstrates that economic growth alone cannot be interpreted as evidence of sustainable prosperity. Rather, SDG 8 progress depends on whether institutional systems successfully redistribute opportunities and protect workers during periods of structural transition.

The literature therefore suggests that inclusive economic governance is central to SDG 8 implementation. Countries that combine innovation policies with labor protections, education investment and social welfare systems tend to produce more equitable and resilient economic outcomes. This finding also demonstrates strong interconnections between SDG 8 and SDG 10, since inequality directly shapes access to employment opportunities and economic participation.

Overall, the literature presents SDG 8 as a multidimensional objective shaped by a combination of technological, economic, and social factors. Reaching this goal will require countries to balance innovation with fairness and to ensure that economic development aligns with long term sustainability and human wellbeing.

3.3. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, SDG 9

SDG 9 focuses on promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, fostering innovation, and building resilient infrastructure. Where digital connectivity, research investment, industrial innovations and such are considered tools to measure its advancement [43] and modern technologies and developed research key towards the accomplishment of its goals [44]. Countries have attempted to advance SDG 9 in different ways, with results heavily shaped by governance quality, human capital, stability, and innovation capacity. The following sections use academic case studies and literature to examine how well countries are preparing for and implementing SDG 9, and how governance, innovation, security, and human-capital development affect progress.

One of the primary observations about governance mechanisms during the SDG readiness phase in the Arab region is presented by Alagla [45]. His findings show that institutional arrangements remained disjointed, with ministries operating independently rather than through integrated governance frameworks, even though most governments publicly committed to the SDGs. Because innovation, industrial transformation, and infrastructure development require cross-sectoral cooperation, long-term financial commitments, and clear monitoring processes, this fragmentation particularly harmed SDG 9. Alagla [45] argues that the early absence of strong auditing systems limited countries' ability to determine whether their practices aligned with global indicators. Instead of using a comprehensive assessment mechanism capable of identifying weaknesses in policy coherence, inter-ministerial coordination, or resource mobilization, auditing was treated mainly as a narrow financial activity. This perspective is relevant when considering SDG 9, which emphasizes the importance of transparent and accountable governance for effective innovative ecosystems. Without performance-oriented auditing, countries cannot identify deviations from industrialization goals or evaluate the impact of infrastructure investments.

From a broader perspective, Alagla [45]'s work highlights a critical flaw: many countries entered the SDG timeline with insufficient baseline diagnostic assessments, meaning that initial data were often inaccurate or incomplete. The lack of accurate baseline information places governments at a structural disadvantage when attempting to measure progress because SDG 9 indicators rely heavily on quantifiable outcomes, such as manufacturing value added, R&D investments, and infrastructure quality. This underscores the importance of developing audit tools that directly support SDG implementation, a recommendation consistent with UN guidelines but not yet well established in many developing countries.

Using King Faisal University as a case study, Mahgoub [46]'s analysis contributes to the literature by examining how innovation-focused learning environments can accelerate SDG progress. His research shows that educational institutions play a significant role in promoting innovation literacy, which is essential for achieving SDG 9. Industry–academia partnerships emphasizes interdisciplinary collaboration, research–industry partnerships, and project-based learning. One of Mahgoub [46]'s main conclusions is that higher-education

institutions can function as micro-level models of SDG governance, demonstrating how well-designed research ecosystems can support national reform initiatives. According to his analysis, universities that implement modern, innovation-oriented curricula help build a skilled professional workforce capable of supporting industrial diversification.

Critically, Mahgoub [46]'s assessment shows that organizational culture, leadership commitment, and the availability of research resources are critical for effective innovation frameworks. He notes that SDG 9 cannot be achieved solely through financial investment in technology; instead, meaningful change emerges from the development of innovative mindsets, supported by environments that promote continuous learning. This conclusion aligns with global research showing that effective SDG 9 implementation requires not only physical infrastructure but also "soft" infrastructure skills, creativity, digital literacy, and academic capacity.

By examining the connection between security, political stability, and sustainable development outcomes, Bouzehhar [47] broadens the discussion. His findings highlight that SDG 9 and other goals cannot advance without a secure and stable environment. A lack of stability undermines financial flows, weakens institutional performance, and discourages private-sector participation—factors essential for industrial innovation. According to Bouzehhar [47], sustainability cannot be separated from social peace, predictable governance, and the rule of law. These conditions ensure that long-term technological and industrial commitments are protected from political volatility. Growing industrial zones, digital infrastructure, and manufacturing clusters require long-term stability because they involve high-risk investments. From a critical standpoint, this focus on security fills an important gap in the literature, as many SDG studies emphasize economic or environmental dimensions while overlooking governance and stability. His approach aligns with global findings that link SDG progress to broader systems of societal stability and institutional resilience.

Taallah and Chine [48] provide an in-depth analysis of human-capital challenges in Maghreb countries during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their evaluation shows that the pandemic significantly hindered human-capital development, directly affecting SDG 9 progress. Skilled labor is essential for innovation, digitization, and resilient infrastructure, yet the pandemic reduced educational opportunities, increased unemployment, and contributed to widespread learning losses. The authors note, however, that the pandemic also created opportunities, such as accelerating digital transformation, expanding remote-learning platforms, and increasing awareness of the importance of R&D investment.

These developments align with the aims of SDG 9, particularly those related to strengthening scientific research and technological capacity. Their findings suggest that the post-pandemic recovery period could be used to rebuild a stronger human-capital base, especially if governments prioritize innovation-support mechanisms, technical training, and digital infrastructure. Critically, the authors show how fragile innovation systems and inadequate R&D funding had already made Maghreb countries' SDG 9 progress uneven before the pandemic, and COVID-19 exacerbated these structural vulnerabilities. Their argument supports an important conclusion: human-capital investment must be treated as an economic and industrial strategy linked to national productivity and competitiveness, not merely as a social protection measure [48].

A comprehensive review of the four studies reveals several recurring themes. All authors agree, either explicitly or implicitly, that weak governance frameworks hinder SDG progress. While [47] links governance to security and stability, Alagla [45] emphasizes the importance of auditing and institutional coherence. Together, these insights show that clear monitoring systems, coordinated governance, and stable political environments are necessary for SDG 9 success. Similarly, both Taallah and Chine [48] and Mahgoub [46]

stress the role of education and innovation. Collectively, the findings demonstrate that SDG 9 depends not only on physical infrastructure, but also on "human infrastructure", educational institutions, skilled labor markets, and research systems.

This comparative synthesis demonstrates that progress toward SDG 9 is not determined solely by technological advancement or infrastructure investment, but rather by the interaction between governance quality, institutional stability, and human-capital development. Countries with stronger policy coordination mechanisms and innovation-oriented educational systems appear better positioned to translate infrastructure expansion into sustainable industrial transformation. In contrast, fragmented governance structures and weak institutional accountability frequently limit the long-term effectiveness of innovation policies. These findings reveal a broader conceptual linkage between economic dynamism and social resilience, supporting the argument that sustainable prosperity depends on integrating technological modernization with institutional inclusiveness and adaptive governance capacity.

The COVID-19 disruptions described by Taallah and Chine [48] illustrate how external shocks can undermine SDG readiness, especially in countries with vulnerable institutional and innovation systems. This vulnerability reinforces the importance of strong governance structures, as emphasized by Alagla [45] and Bouzehhar [47]. These studies collectively show that SDG 9 cannot be achieved in isolation; instead, it requires coordinated policies linking innovation-driven education, security stabilization, human-capital development, and governance reforms. Additionally, the literature on SDG 11 shows that cities function as both engines of innovation and centers of vulnerability. While some urban areas lead in clean mobility and green infrastructure, others struggle with governance challenges, housing shortages, and limited public participation, all of which slow sustainable development.

Across the literature, several critical themes emerge. Governance reform is foundational, with SDG 9 implementation requiring performance-based auditing, long-term industrial strategies, and cross-ministerial coordination. Higher-education institutions must act as innovation hubs, contributing not only academic programs but also research capacity to national innovation systems. Security and political stability remain essential, as infrastructure development and innovation ecosystems cannot thrive in unstable environments. Human-capital investment is particularly important in the post-COVID period, where digitalization, skills training, and R&D investment are necessary to address widening skills gaps. Strong data systems and evidence-based policymaking are also crucial for monitoring progress and shaping effective interventions. Together, the literature indicates that SDG 9 success depends on the alignment of stability, human-capital strength, innovation capability, and governance quality.

The reviewed literature also highlights important interdependencies between SDG 9 and the broader Prosperity Cluster. Industrial modernization and innovation capacity strongly influence the achievement of SDG 8 through employment creation and skills development, while resilient infrastructure contributes directly to SDG 11 by improving urban sustainability and service accessibility. At the same time, unequal access to innovation systems and digital technologies may reinforce structural inequalities addressed under SDG 10. This demonstrates that SDG 9 operates as a connecting mechanism within the Prosperity Cluster, linking economic productivity with social inclusion and environmental transition. Such interactions reinforce the paper's central conceptual argument that prosperity emerges through the coordinated advancement of dynamism, equity, and environmental sustainability rather than through isolated sectoral progress.

Overall, the studies collectively show that SDG 9 is an interconnected goal requiring coordinated institutional, educational, and economic reforms. Countries that fail to integrate these elements risk falling behind in sustainable development and global competitiveness.

The findings related to prosperity-focused SDGs emphasize that sustainable development cannot rely on isolated measures. Renewable energy cannot expand if inequality deepens, and workforce vulnerabilities, such as skill shortages and lack of job protection, can hinder emerging industries. Modern infrastructure cannot enhance resilience among marginalized groups, and rapid urbanization cannot be sustained without adequate planning, housing, and environmental protection. Achieving prosperity for all requires balancing economic growth, environmental stewardship, and social justice. Although progress toward sustainable development is occurring, it remains uneven and too slow to meet global targets. A sustainable future requires global collaboration, equitable access to resources, technological connectivity, and policies centered on people and the planet, where prosperity is defined not only by economic growth but by systems that support all communities without compromising the prospects of future generations.

3.4. Reduced Inequalities, SDG 10

According to recent research done on SDG 10, one of the most significant obstacles to achieving prosperity goals (SDG's 7–11) is inequality. The goal of this SDG is to minimize inequalities present within countries [49,50]. A study done by Bhandari [16] states that inequality does not only focus on income but also includes differences in gender, education, internet access, and opportunities. The study identifies five major challenges linked to SDG 10: widening wealth and income gaps, the exclusion of underprivileged groups, poor governance, unequal access to quality education and healthcare, and the unequal distribution of benefits from globalization and technology. Which means that while many nations are making progress in areas like innovation (SDG 9) and renewable energy (SDG 7), the benefits are not necessarily distributed fairly amongst their populations. These advancements tend to mostly benefit higher income groups more than lower income ones. Ahmed [51] further explains this point that these gaps are made even worse by unequal access to basic rights like healthcare which underprivileged groups from receiving the same benefits from the state's development as wealthier groups.

When comparing 28 European countries, Szymańska [52] discovered clear regional differences. The countries with the least amount of inequality in economy include Sweden and Finland, which have solid welfare systems and inclusive based policies. On the other hand, Greece and Spain still experience income gaps and ineffective distribution systems. To add on, the study also talks about how COVID 19 played a role in amplifying these differences, especially for people with low-income jobs and limited digital access. According to Scott and Thau [53], social exclusion patterns frequently become worse during times of crisis, further isolating less privileged populations from social and economic opportunities.

According to Lorenzo [54], inequality is now built in the global economy. The study shows that even though digital transformation and globalization improve a country's overall economy, most of the benefits go to people who are already privileged, like skilled workers and business owners. This makes it harder for developing countries to reduce inequality unless they have strong social programs, effective governments, and fair taxes. Overall, the study makes it clear that economic growth and new technology are not enough on their own to create equality. Policies like affordable digital access, fair taxation and inclusive education are required to make sure prosperity is distributed more evenly across society. In a similar manner, Doidge and Kelly [55] emphasize that SDG 10 demands specific policies since market-driven growth is insufficient to address inequality both within and between nations.

When comparing different SDGs associated with prosperity, a reoccurring pattern becomes obvious: advancements in economic growth, innovation or clean energy (SDGs 7–9) do not automatically mean fairness and equal opportunities. According to Bhandari [16],

inequality is built into the way opportunities are distributed in society. For example, high-tech companies and renewable energy programs usually benefit people in urban and wealthy regions, leaving rural areas and underprivileged groups out of the same benefits. A study by Oestreich [56], states that these differences are exactly the reason SDG 10 was established, in order to make sure that advancements in development do not further widen the gap between privileged and underprivileged communities.

The literature collectively suggests that inequality functions not merely as a social outcome, but as a structural constraint affecting the implementation of the entire Prosperity Cluster. Countries experiencing high disparities in income, education, and digital access often struggle to distribute the benefits of innovation, clean energy, and economic growth equitably across society. This helps explain why progress across SDGs 7–11 remains uneven despite technological advancement and economic expansion in many regions. The findings therefore indicate that reducing inequality is not separate from prosperity-oriented development, but rather a prerequisite for achieving durable and socially inclusive sustainability transitions.

Szymańska [52] shows that strong and effective leadership plays a key role in reducing inequality. Countries that invest in innovation while also maintaining effective welfare systems can achieve both economic growth and fairness. This supports the idea that SDG 10 serves as a balance among the prosperity goals by making sure that improvements in areas like technology and infrastructure also result in raising living standards for all members of a society. The example in the study of countries in northern Europe shows that social equality can go hand in hand with economic growth when effective governments with inclusive policies exist [57]. It also states that nations with consistent SDG-focused governance typically achieve better and more inclusive outcomes, stressing the importance of strong institutions and political commitment to the cause.

Lorenzo [54] brings modern insights to this topic by introducing the idea of digital fairness. In today's interconnected world, access to digital technologies and online opportunities are just as important as income in determining inequality. Access to information, work, and education are all impacted by access to the internet. Members of society risk being excluded from the digital economy in the lack of investment of countries in technology development and affordability. Therefore, addressing these problems and ensuring affordable internet access is necessary to reduce inequality in this digitally connected world. Lawrence [58] argues that many countries continue to have difficulty overcoming the structural barriers that restrict the successful implementation of inclusive SDG plans, especially in the social and digital sectors.

A broader synthesis across the reviewed studies reveals an important conceptual relationship between SDG 10 and the wider prosperity framework. While SDGs 7, 8, and 9 primarily focus on expanding energy systems, employment opportunities, and innovation capacity, SDG 10 evaluates whether these benefits are distributed fairly among different social groups and regions. In this sense, SDG 10 acts as a balancing mechanism within the Prosperity Cluster by linking economic dynamism with social equity. The literature demonstrates that sustainable prosperity cannot be measured solely through productivity or technological progress, but must also consider inclusion, accessibility, and distributive justice.

Inequality looks different from place to place, factors like how developed a country is and how strong its government systems are playing a huge role in determining it. Szymańska [52] found that countries like Sweden and Finland perform better in SDG 10 due to their strong welfare systems. In contrast, despite enjoying economic growth, many southern and eastern European countries still experience higher levels of inequality, because of their weaker tax systems and less social support. Bhandari [16] added that when

prosperity rises, with existing inequality, it often leads to social frustration and threatens long term stability.

According to Lorenzo [54] even though many south and east Asian nations experience rapid economic growth through trade and technological advancements, significant disparities in income and opportunities persist. Cities benefit the most from globalization, while rural areas and low-income workers often experience limited benefits from such growth. This shows that without policies that focus on equality, countries can make progress in SDGs 8 and 9 but still fall behind in SDG 10.

Research also shows that SDG 10 is linked to other goals. For example, with clean energy (SDG 7) wealthier families can afford renewable energy, whereas poorer households still depend on older, and less efficient energy sources. For SDG 8, people who do not have access to stable income have less chances of improving their living conditions, which increases economic inequality. With SDG 9, the digital gap makes it harder for people in developing countries to join new sectors that rely on the internet. SDG 11 also reflects these differences, because many modern city projects focus on already well-developed areas and overlook poorer neighborhoods. Szymańska [52] and Bhandari [16] argue that growth that is based only on technology and efficiency often makes inequality worse with time. Countries that perform the best in prosperity are the ones that combine innovation and equality, guaranteeing progress that benefits all members of society, without leaving anyone behind. Doidge and Kelly [55] point out that when inequality is actively addressed, progress in other SDGs becomes stronger and more sustainable since fairness enhances overall development benefits.

All reviewed research keeps emphasizing on the importance of reducing inequality in order to achieve sustainable prosperity. If many people around the world continue to be deprived from the many benefits of economic growth, its value is reduced. Policies that balance growth with equality like investments in education, fair taxes and easily accessible welfare systems are necessary towards sustainable development.

Inclusive digital access remains essential to preventing technological advancement from reinforcing existing social and economic inequalities. As a result of this, SDG 10 acts as a link between different prosperity goals, ensuring that improvements in energy, employment and innovation contribute to improving the social aspect of sustainable development.

In conclusion, SDG 10 builds the foundation for inclusive and sustainable prosperity. Only when societies make a commitment to equality in opportunities for everyone will economic growth, innovation and environmental advancement lead to long-term stability. The first action should be taken by governments, where they should aim for measures that combine both inclusivity and performance, so that prosperity is distributed throughout all society rather than only in the hands of privileged individuals.

3.5. Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG 11

SDG 11 is focused on the encouragement of sustainable cities and communities. This has been interpreted and attempted in many forms with varying degrees of success. The following section will use case study analysis to analyze how well sustainability plans have encourage economic growth and environmental innovation while balancing the need for social inclusion.

Academic research analyzing several attempts to implement smart and sustainable strategies across cities found that Copenhagen and Oslo were leaders in mobility and climate. Reviews of European smart-city initiatives showed significant improvements in clean transport and climate action, particularly in the case of Copenhagen which targets carbon dioxide net neutrality by an ambitious end of 2025 [59]. They aim to do this by pushing through with making cycling the main transport option in commutes which has paid off. However, some of the smart-city tech has not delivered the promised environ-

mental benefits yet, highlighting how some technology is not as effective in practice as in theory. Oslo has also excelled in promoting electric vehicle (EV) uptake which is part of their schemes which have vastly reduced emissions and resulting in Oslo being recognized as the world capital of electric vehicles in 2018 [59]. Although, there are still issues with air quality management and social segregation with some questioning the reliability of its data-driven programs.

Zurich has attempted similar schemes yet has run into problems with governance, equality, and measurement methods. They have suffered with densification pressures and land-use conflicts which have been compounded by funding issues. Oyadeyi and Oyadeyi [59] explain their uneven public participation has hampered the sustainability agenda and attempting to track too many metrics has made it hard to pinpoint whether progress has actually been made.

Mazzetto, El-Khoury and Malkoun [60] conducted a recent case study on affordable housing and inclusivity in Beirut which highlighted five principles for both sustainable and inexpensive housing. They explain how more than 80% of cities still lack affordable options and this issue has been exacerbated in Beirut because building laws have favored large developers who have excluded low-income residents resulting in a large volume of vacant housing stock. The authors argue that vacant unit reuse should be promoted and regulation should be revised to improve social inclusion and environmental performance.

Another attempt to improve sustainability has come in the city of Chesapeake who are attempting to create land and water interfaces that enhance resilience. The city faces worrying sea level rises and worsening storm surge risks which has led to widening inequality in the flood prone northern neighborhoods [61]. City leadership proposes using managed retreat planning to draw back houses and move citizens, coupled with expanding conservation easements to restore wetlands. This will require redeveloping brownfield sites for offshore wind electricity and ensuring that marginalized voices are included in city decision making. To identify wider trends, Lai, Wang and Xia [62] conducted a systematic review which found that future urban communities were planning to group around smart technologies and AI to enhance community participation and promote social equity. In general, the literature showed that there are many different definitions and interpretations of a "sustainable city" and that they require complex, system-wide governance that balances needs of the many, not the few [63].

The research has distinct implications for inclusivity. The cases of Beirut and Chesapeake highlight that prosperity suffers without evenly spread attention. The rules and decision-making process must consider everyone's security and housing needs equally otherwise it will lead to exclusion and disparities in the population. In Beirut, this can be corrected by reusing vacant homes and reforming housing regulations on construction. Chesapeake should focus on encouraging more community engagement and providing protection infrastructure for the most vulnerable. SDG 11 involves inclusivity as an aim which can only be achieved through reducing displacement risk and improving access to affordable housing.

A comparative reading of these case studies demonstrates that successful urban sustainability strategies depend less on isolated technological interventions and more on integrated governance systems that combine environmental planning, social inclusion, and institutional coordination. Cities such as Copenhagen and Oslo illustrate how long-term policy consistency and citizen participation can reinforce climate-oriented urban transformation, while Beirut and Chesapeake reveal how governance fragmentation and unequal resource distribution can intensify vulnerability and exclusion. These findings suggest that SDG 11 operates not only as an environmental objective, but also as a framework for balancing urban resilience, economic opportunity, and social justice within rapidly changing urban systems.

There are also inferences for innovation. Copenhagen and Oslo illustrate that innovation is not simply digitalizing infrastructure, it is incorporating a mix of behavior shifting city design, like with bike paths, and introducing policy that involves citizens to create equitable outcomes. If technology fails to reach the desired outcomes, governance and participation gaps can be the cause because there is a lack of trust, finance, and involvement. Therefore, innovation through the lens of SDG 11 must combine technical, social, and institutional creativity.

With environmental protection, nature-based interventions with wetlands and living shorelines can be partnered with bicycle-focused travel to help reduce urban emissions, improve air quality, and enforce resilience. However, many sustainability programs, like in the case of Zurich, force too many people into the same areas which causes overpopulation, harming quality of life. Oslo's air quality is also another area of concern due to overcrowding, which shows the trade-off between providing green spaces and moving people around to accommodate short term plans.

The research also provided insights into measurement and learning. Too many complex indices can overburden decision-making which means that sustainable cities should focus on fewer, better indicators that accurately capture real world mobility, housing, and vulnerability into one easy to understand scorecard so that progress can be tracked in alignment with SDG11 goals.

The reviewed literature further highlights that SDG 11 functions as a connecting platform within the prosperity cluster because urban systems directly influence energy consumption, labor opportunities, infrastructure accessibility, and patterns of inequality. Sustainable cities therefore become spaces where the interactions among SDGs 7, 8, 9, and 10 are most visible. Urban policies that integrate affordable housing, clean transportation, renewable energy, and inclusive governance can generate simultaneous environmental, economic, and social benefits. Conversely, fragmented urban planning may deepen inequalities, increase environmental pressures, and weaken long-term resilience. This reinforces the central argument of the study that sustainable prosperity emerges through coordinated and multidimensional development rather than isolated policy interventions.

There are ties to the findings for SDG 11 and other SDGs and regions in the world. SGD 11 forms an important synergy with SDG 7 as exemplified through Copenhagen's decarbonization and cycling shifts lead to cleaner grids and self-powered travel reduces household transport costs and emissions drop because less petrol is required. Although, the cities that have piloted mostly technological solutions have returned weak results which is a warning against being over reliant on gadgets. Technology should be coupled with behavior and policy changes so that more complete changes can be enforced which will be more efficient.

Furthermore, there are connections with SDG 11 and 9 which focuses on industry and innovation. Chesapeake's offshore wind electricity generation is a plan which ties climate adaptation with green jobs and a sustainable industrial policy. It shows that sustainability plans can connect economic with social goals where SDG 9 benefits from the work done in SDG 11. When paired with inclusive workforce training and anti-displacement protections, these two SDGs can really go hand in hand to deliver lasting benefits for all.

There are divides between the Global North and South, however. Northern European cities show how governance frictions that arise from trust, participation, and land conflict can arise even when resources are plentiful. Beirut highlights how greed in corporations and corruption can lead to exclusivity in housing which is exacerbated by restrictive resources. For cities and communities around the world to really succeed and be sustainable, knowledge and resources must be able to flow to where they are required which necessitates global cooperation.

SDGs 3 and 4 could also be impacted through developments made in SDG 11. The studies on housing show that greater affordability improves living standards with households being able to improve their health and focus more time on education when they are not worried about housing. Therefore, solving housing shortages can give communities the opportunity to live fuller and healthier lives.

There are key takeaways from the research and following analysis. Firstly, integration works better than independent silos. High performing cities create inclusivity through affordability and participation. They drive innovation through technology but also focus on behavioral and institutional change that must accompany it for tech to be truly impactful. Environmental protection can take the form of nature-based solutions and compact mobility and blend them into one program. Cities have failed when they have fragmented strategies that attempt one-off plans and use complicated metrics without clear cohesion.

Additionally, governance can serve as a bottleneck when it is not implemented properly. The main barriers to progress are not engineering but trust, continuity, financing, and laws. Zurich's example of how disputes have arisen over land use, Oslo's issues with the trust in data and social equity gaps, as well as Beirut's skewed regulations towards developers show how SDG 11 advancement must include participation reforms and stable funding.

The regions with the highest climate risks should be the areas where equity is most targeted. The case of Chesapeake highlights this where proposals have been made to restore wetlands and implement a managed retreat through inclusive decision-making which will provide greener jobs in the process. This emphasizes how prosperity can be inclusive when it prioritizes vulnerable neighborhoods and not just infrastructure.

Finally, cities and communities should attempt to make circularity schemes practical. They should treat waste and resource recovery as supporting infrastructure while they focus on meaningful gains. This can take the form of reusing empty homes in Beirut, redeveloping brownfields into clean tech hubs in Chesapeake, and designing for adaptive reuse, rather than the whole sustainability strategy. Several indicative sustainability efforts undertaken by a number of cities are discussed are compared in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of sustainability efforts, and the cities discussed.

City	Key Achievements	Main Challenges	Implications
Copenhagen	Improved clean transport Encouraged cycling Working toward carbon neutrality by 2025	Some smart city technologies did not work well	Technology alone is not enough people's behavior also mattered
Olso	High use of electric cars Big drop in emissions	Air quality issues, Social inequality	Good sustainability needs Fairness and trust
Zurich	Tried to apply smart city ideas	Governance issues Not enough equality	Using too many measurements and not involving people slows progress
Beirut	Identified principles for affordable housing Noted potential in vacant housing	Not enough affordable homes Building laws favor, big developers Low-income groups excluded Many homes empty, but unused	Changing laws and reusing vacant homes can improve fairness
Chesapeake	Plans for managed retreat Conservation projects Land- water protection ideas Plans for offshore wind energy	Rising sea levels Flood risk in poor areas	Climate plans should focus on protecting vulnerable groups

Regardless of the specific instance, the beneficial synergies appear when housing, mobility, and the resilient approach are considered collectively. Affordable housing and clean jobs, coupled with active transport and EVs mobility help create a healthy environment which reduces GHG emissions and enhances inclusion. The trade-offs are noted when densification faces public spaces, the cultural environment, and equity. Smart tech undermines capacity development within communities when it is relied upon solely. This highlights how a brighter future can be obtained only when prosperity is gained through integrated, inclusive, innovative, and green urbanism. This aligns with the course of the discipline that continues toward AI "smart" solutions paired with participation and equity as joint drivers of SDG11.

In Table 2, the geographical distribution of the reviewed literature reveals substantial differences in how prosperity-related SDGs are pursued across regions. Studies from developed economies predominantly focus on innovation systems, clean-energy transitions, digitalization and smart-city development. In contrast, studies from developing and emerging economies place greater emphasis on infrastructure expansion, energy accessibility, employment generation and institutional capacity-building. The reviewed evidence suggests that while developed countries face challenges related to decarbonization, aging infrastructure and social inclusion, developing regions continue to confront more fundamental barriers including inadequate infrastructure, governance limitations and restricted access to finance and technology. These findings indicate that pathways toward prosperity are highly context-dependent and require differentiated policy approaches rather than universal solutions.

Table 2. Geographic clustering of reviewed studies within the Prosperity SDGs literature.

Cluster	Representative Countries	Main SDGs	Key Findings
Developed economies	Sweden, Finland, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland	7, 8, 9, 10, 11	Strong institutional capacity, advanced renewable energy adoption, innovation-driven growth, lower inequality
Emerging economies	China, Indonesia, Türkiye, Brazil, South Africa	7, 8, 9, 10	Rapid industrialization and technological adoption, but uneven distribution of benefits
Developing economies	Lebanon, Maghreb countries, Sub-Saharan Africa	7, 9, 10, 11	Infrastructure deficits, governance challenges, energy-access limitations
Vulnerable/fragile contexts	Conflict-affected or politically unstable regions	9, 10, 11	Institutional instability constrains long-term SDG implementation

3.6. Economic, Social and Environmental Aspects: Road to Prosperity

Prosperity in the context of sustainable development represents a fundamental rethinking of how societies pursue progress. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reframes prosperity not as narrow economic expansion, but as a multidimensional condition in which economic dynamism, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability are mutually reinforcing. This vision is embedded in the Prosperity Cluster of the SDGs (7–11), which collectively seek to ensure that growth generates shared benefits, reduces inequalities, and operates within planetary boundaries [7]. The road to prosperity, therefore, is not linear or sector-specific; it is an integrated pathway where economic, social, and environmental dimensions interact continuously.

The concept of the "Prosperity Cluster" developed in this study provides an analytical perspective that emphasizes the interdependence of SDGs 7–11 rather than treating them as isolated development targets. Within this framework, economic dynamism refers to productive growth, innovation, and employment generation; equity refers to fair distribution

of opportunities, services, and participation, while environmental sustainability reflects the capacity of societies to pursue development within ecological limits. The literature reviewed throughout this paper demonstrates that these dimensions continuously interact, meaning that progress in one area may either reinforce or constrain advancement in another. Consequently, prosperity is conceptualized not simply as economic performance, but as the balanced integration of social, economic, and environmental systems.

From an economic perspective, prosperity is traditionally associated with growth in income, productivity and industrial output. However, extensive research has demonstrated that growth alone does not guarantee long-term well-being or resilience. Economies that rely heavily on resource extraction or environmentally destructive practices may achieve short-term gains while undermining future prosperity through ecological degradation and social instability [64]. Consequently, the SDG framework emphasizes inclusive and sustainable economic growth, particularly through SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure). These goals recognize that productive employment, innovation, and resilient infrastructure are essential drivers of economic dynamism, but only when embedded within broader social and environmental safeguards.

Decent work is central to this redefined prosperity. Employment is not merely a source of income; it is a mechanism for social participation, dignity and empowerment. Empirical evidence shows that labor markets characterized by informality, precarious employment, and weak labor protections exacerbate inequality and social exclusion, even in growing economies [65]. SDG 8 therefore stresses productive employment, labor rights, and safe working environments, aligning economic objectives with social justice. Furthermore, the promotion of entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises contributes to diversified economic structures that are more resilient to shocks, including economic crises and climate-related disruptions.

Innovation and infrastructure, addressed under SDG 9, further illustrate the interdependence of economic and environmental objectives. Infrastructure investments—such as transport systems, energy grids, and digital connectivity—enhance productivity and market access, but their long-term contribution to prosperity depends on sustainability and resilience. Climate-resilient and low-carbon infrastructure reduces vulnerability to extreme weather events while lowering emissions and resource consumption [66]. Innovation, particularly in clean technologies, plays a dual role: it stimulates economic competitiveness while enabling environmental transitions. Research consistently shows that countries investing in renewable energy technologies, energy efficiency, and sustainable industrial processes experience positive employment effects alongside reductions in environmental pressures [67].

The social dimension of prosperity is equally critical, as economic growth that benefits only a segment of society can undermine social cohesion and political stability. SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) explicitly addresses disparities in income, opportunity, and access to resources within and among countries. Inequality is increasingly recognized as a structural barrier to sustainable development, limiting human capital formation and weakening trust in institutions. Studies indicate that high levels of inequality are associated with poorer health outcomes, lower educational attainment, and reduced social mobility, all of which constrain long-term prosperity [68]. Reducing inequalities is therefore not merely a moral imperative but an economic and social necessity.

Social inclusion is also closely linked to access to basic services and opportunities, particularly in rapidly urbanizing contexts. SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) highlights the role of cities as engines of prosperity, innovation, and cultural exchange. Urban areas account for more than 80% of global GDP, yet they also concentrate poverty, pollution, and vulnerability to climate risks [69]. Sustainable urban development—through

affordable housing, efficient public transport, and accessible public services—enhances quality of life while supporting economic participation. Inclusive urban planning reduces spatial inequalities and fosters social integration, ensuring that cities remain drivers rather than inhibitors of sustainable prosperity.

The environmental dimension underpins both economic and social aspects of prosperity. Without healthy ecosystems and stable climatic conditions, neither economic growth nor social well-being can be sustained. SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) is particularly significant in this regard, as energy systems lie at the heart of modern economies. Access to reliable and affordable energy is a prerequisite for industrial development, healthcare, education, and digital connectivity. At the same time, fossil fuel-based energy systems are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, with severe implications for human health and environmental stability [70]. The transition to clean and renewable energy thus represents a critical pathway toward aligning economic development with environmental stewardship.

The concept of "clean growth" or "green growth" captures this alignment by emphasizing economic expansion that minimizes environmental harm and enhances resource efficiency [71]. Renewable energy deployment, for example, has been shown to generate substantial employment opportunities while reducing emissions and improving air quality. These co-benefits demonstrate how environmental innovation can simultaneously advance economic and social objectives, reinforcing the integrated nature of prosperity within the SDG framework.

Environmental sustainability is also increasingly incorporated into broader measures of prosperity. Traditional economic indicators fail to account for the depletion of natural capital, such as forests, freshwater, and biodiversity. In response, alternative frameworks like the Inclusive Wealth Index incorporate produced, human, and natural capital to assess whether development pathways are truly sustainable [72]. Evidence from these assessments suggests that many countries experiencing GDP growth are simultaneously eroding their natural capital, thereby compromising future prosperity. This underscores the necessity of integrating environmental considerations into economic planning and decision-making.

The interactions among economic, social, and environmental dimensions are characterized by both synergies and trade-offs. Progress in one domain can generate positive spill-overs in others—for instance, investments in clean energy can improve public health, create jobs, and reduce emissions. However, poorly designed policies may also produce tensions, such as industrial expansion that displaces communities or degrades ecosystems. Research on SDG interactions emphasizes the importance of policy coherence and integrated governance to manage these trade-offs effectively [23]. Policy coherence for sustainable development involves aligning fiscal, industrial, social, and environmental policies to ensure that progress toward one goal does not undermine others.

A major pattern emerging from the reviewed literature is that uneven SDG progress is frequently linked to weak policy integration and fragmented governance systems. Many countries have advanced selectively in areas such as renewable energy deployment or technological modernization while simultaneously experiencing persistent inequalities, labor vulnerabilities, or urban exclusion. This demonstrates that isolated sectoral progress cannot by itself produce sustainable prosperity. Instead, the findings suggest that effective implementation of the Prosperity Cluster requires coordinated institutional frameworks capable of integrating environmental innovation with social protection and inclusive economic planning. The comparative evidence across the reviewed studies therefore reinforces the importance of multidimensional governance approaches in achieving balanced and resilient development outcomes.

Despite the clarity of this integrated vision, the road to prosperity faces persistent challenges. Structural inequalities, limited financial resources, technological gaps, and institutional weaknesses constrain many countries' ability to implement holistic development strategies. Developing countries, in particular, face the dual challenge of expanding economic opportunities while adapting to and mitigating climate change, often with limited fiscal space. Addressing these challenges requires international cooperation, technology transfer, and capacity building, as emphasized throughout the 2030 Agenda [7].

Strategic pathways toward sustainable prosperity therefore include integrated policy design, investment in human capital, sustainable infrastructure development, and innovation for inclusion. Education and skills development enable individuals to participate in evolving labor markets shaped by digitalization and the green transition. Social protection systems cushion vulnerable populations against economic and environmental shocks, enhancing resilience and social cohesion. At the same time, strong institutions and participatory governance ensure that development processes are inclusive and accountable.

The synthesis presented throughout this review also contributes to ongoing academic discussions surrounding SDG integration and sustainability transitions. Rather than examining SDGs independently, the findings illustrate how prosperity-oriented goals operate through interconnected socio-technical, institutional, and environmental systems. Energy transitions influence employment structures, innovation capacity affects inequality patterns, and urban governance shapes both environmental resilience and social inclusion. This interconnected perspective provides a more comprehensive understanding of sustainable development by highlighting that prosperity emerges through coordinated transformation across multiple domains simultaneously. Accordingly, the Prosperity Cluster framework offers a useful conceptual lens for evaluating whether development pathways are capable of generating long-term resilience, inclusivity, and environmental sustainability together.

The findings of this review also carry important policy implications across different development contexts. In developed economies, progress toward the Prosperity SDGs increasingly depends on accelerating decarbonization, enhancing social inclusion and ensuring that technological innovation benefits all segments of society. In emerging economies, the challenge lies in balancing industrial expansion and economic growth with environmental sustainability and social equity. For developing and lower-income countries, priorities remain centered on expanding access to affordable energy, strengthening infrastructure, creating decent employment opportunities and improving institutional capacity. These differences suggest that while the objectives of SDGs 7–11 are universal, implementation strategies must be adapted to national and regional development conditions.

In conclusion, the road to prosperity within the SDG framework is inherently multidimensional. Economic dynamism, social inclusion, and environmental innovation are not separate or competing objectives; they are interdependent pillars of sustainable development. The Prosperity Cluster of the SDGs provides a coherent structure for advancing this integrated vision, emphasizing that long-term prosperity depends on the quality, inclusiveness, and sustainability of growth. By aligning economic policies with social equity and environmental stewardship, societies can move toward a form of prosperity that enhances well-being today while safeguarding opportunities for future generations.

In Table 3 below, there is a list of studies alongside their major findings on the prosperity context and relative SDG cluster, so that the reader can acquire further insights and more detailed knowledge on case studies and policy implementations that have been made on this particular area. Table 3 presents representative studies that illustrate the principal themes, methodological approaches, and policy insights identified across the reviewed literature. It is intended as an illustrative synthesis rather than an exhaustive catalog of all studies included in the review. The majority of the relevant studies found

in the literature are discussed in all Section 3 subsections (Sections 3.1–3.8), and, as stated in the Methodology Section of the article, in order to maintain quality and readability of the article, all included and discussed studies are listed and classified according to their primary SDG focus, year and first author in the Supplementary Table S1.

Table 3. Relevant literature.

Article No.	Author/s Date	Title/Focus of Study	Method	Findings of Study
1	[73]	Sustainable Development-Based Approaches to Urban Recovery and Prosperity.	Scientific literature.	Conditions in which people live in, and conditions of life are proven to be improved through the advancement of infrastructure and social initiatives, as well as the role of green cities, ecological cities and modern and energy efficient technology in protecting the environment and improving people's living conditions as well as the economical state of regions.
2	[74]	Pathways to Prosperity: Unlocking Sustainable Development through Integrated Waste Management.	Content Analysis	Converting waste into profit through the production of biogas and composting, as well as investing advantageously in income making, capacity building and ecosystem services lead to a future that is prosperous, strong and sustainable.
3	[75]	Sharing Economy from the Sustainable Development Goals Perspective: A Path to Global Prosperity.	Multiple methodologies	Sharing economy considers all 3 pillars of sustainable development, and promotes optimal use of resources, lowers energy consumption, and enhances improvement economically, environmentally and socioeconomically.
4	[76]	Impact of Sharing Economy and Green Energy on Achieving Sustainable Economic Development: Evidence from a Novel NARDL Model.	Secondary data (content analysis)	Sharing economy promotes efficient production of goods and services due to optimal resource usage, enhancing social and environmental aspects of businesses, and production of renewable energy protects the environment and energy resources, both of which grant sustainable development. China's sustainable economic growth positively impacted by sharing economy as well as consumption and production of renewable energy.
5	[77]	A Systematic Literature Review. Relationships Between the Sharing Economy, Sustainability and Sustainable Development Goals.	Content analysis	Sharing economy is effective in achieving economic, environmental and social sustainability and reaches all SDGs.

Table 3. *Cont.*

Article No.	Author/s Date	Title/Focus of Study	Method	Findings of Study
6	[78]	Does Sharing Economy Promote Sustainable Economic Development and Energy Efficiency? Evidence from OECD Countries.	Quantitative assessment	Sharing economy is effective in enhancing socio-economic factors and improve energy efficiency and sustainable economic development.
7	[79]	Is Sharing a Better Alternative for the Planet? The Contribution of Sharing Economy to Sustainable Development Goals.	Literature review	SDG 7 and 10 can be achieved through sharing economy by generating renewable energy and promoting the sharing of this energy and enabling everyone to have access.
8	[29]	Renewable Energy for Sustainable Development Goal of Clean and Affordable Energy.	Content analysis	Usage of renewable energy alongside advanced technology and engineering systems and developing their proficiency and optimality leads to energy accessibility for all and sustainable development.
9	[80]	Digital Technology Innovation and Common Prosperity Within Enterprises: Destruction or Creation.	Data observation	Digital technology innovation positively impacts the efficiency of production, efficient division of labor resource, and establishing stable income distribution as well as excellent growth.
10	[81]	Nexus Between Urban Circular Economies and Sustainable Development Goals: A Systematic Literature Review.	Systematic literature review	The progression of SDGs is significantly interconnected to urban circular economy, further emphasizing the necessity for renewable energy use, resource efficiency, and responsible consumption.
11	[82]	Integrated Management of Construction and Demolition Waste as Key Factor of Urban Circular Economy.	Data observation	Urban resilience can be obtained through the integration of demolition waste and management of construction.
12	[83]	Progress Towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals for EU Urban Communities (SDG11).	Critical content analysis	Most EU Member States benefited from the implementation of SDG 11 showing significant improvement towards reaching environmental and social equity and sustainability.
13	[84]	Analysis of the Prosperity Level of Samarinda City in the Infrastructure Dimension.	Secondary Data and City Prosperity Index (CPI)	The importance of developed infrastructure through policy involvement in order to increase Samarinda's prosperity.
14	[85]	The Impact of Digitization to Ensure Competitiveness of the Ha'il Region to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals.	Mixed methodologies	Digitization in the Ha'il region led to the progression of sustainable development, by achieving 5 SDGs that play a role socially, environmentally and economically.

Table 3. *Cont.*

Article No.	Author/s Date	Title/Focus of Study	Method	Findings of Study
15	[86]	Artificial Intelligence in the Industry 4.0, and Its Impacts on Poverty, Innovation, Infrastructure Development, and the Sustainable Development Goals: Lessons from Emerging Economies.	Content Analysis	AI advances innovation, infrastructure improvement and reliability, transport and economic growth.
16	[87]	Impact of Urban Transport on City Development in the Context of Sustainable Development.	Content analysis	Through enforcing eco-friendly public transportation, modern guidelines to regulate emissions, and regular monitoring, cities improve towards a sustainable and greener future.
17	[88]	Urban Resilience for Urban Sustainability: Concepts, Dimensions, and Perspectives.	Systematic literature review	Urban resilience can be met through urban green space, protective infrastructure, transport accessibility and communication technology.
18	[89]	Future Cities and Sustainable Development: Integrating Renewable Energy, Advanced Materials, and Civil Engineering for Urban Resilience.	Case studies	Renewable energy integration as well as developed materials and civil engineering touches on the social, economical and environmental matters and are crucial for the sustainable development of cities.
19	[90]	The Green City as a Driver of Sustainable Development.	In-depth theoretical analysis and comparative analysis	Emphasizes the positive contribution that the green city has on generating cities that are sustainable, equal, and strong, building cities that benefit their people, protect natural resources and maintain stable advancements at a long-term level, through relying on a comprehensive approach.

3.7. Theoretical Perspectives Underpinning the Prosperity Cluster Literature

A recurring observation across the reviewed literature is the diversity of theoretical perspectives used to examine prosperity-related SDGs. Several studies draw implicitly on sustainable development theory, which conceptualizes economic, social and environmental objectives as interdependent dimensions of long-term societal progress. Research on SDG 7 frequently employs sustainability transition frameworks and socio-technical transition theory to explain shifts from fossil-fuel systems toward renewable energy technologies [27,29].

Studies addressing SDGs 8 and 9 often draw upon innovation systems theory, human-capital theory and endogenous growth theory, emphasizing the role of knowledge, skills, infrastructure and technological innovation in generating sustainable economic development [36,46,86]. Similarly, research on SDG 10 frequently reflects social justice and equity-based perspectives, focusing on the distribution of opportunities, resources and development outcomes among different social groups [16,54].

Within SDG 11, theoretical foundations are commonly derived from urban resilience theory, smart-city frameworks and sustainable urbanism, which examine how cities can balance economic competitiveness, environmental quality and social inclusion [59–61]. Despite these identifiable perspectives, many empirical studies remain largely policy-driven and do not explicitly articulate their theoretical foundations. This suggests an important gap in the literature, as stronger theoretical integration could improve understanding of the mechanisms linking the different components of the Prosperity cluster and facilitate comparative analyses across regions and sectors.

3.8. Research Gaps and Future Directions

The review identifies several important research gaps within the Prosperity cluster literature. First, many studies focus on individual SDGs in isolation, despite increasing recognition that SDGs 7–11 are highly interconnected. Future research should adopt systems-based approaches capable of examining synergies and trade-offs across multiple goals simultaneously.

Second, significant geographical imbalances remain in the evidence base. Most empirical studies originate from Europe and other high-income regions, while evidence from low-income countries and fragile contexts remains comparatively limited. Additional research is needed to understand how prosperity-related SDGs can be achieved under differing institutional, economic and environmental conditions.

Third, the literature remains dominated by descriptive assessments and policy evaluations. Future studies should place greater emphasis on causal analysis, longitudinal assessment and theory-driven investigations capable of explaining why certain interventions succeed while others fail.

Finally, emerging issues such as artificial intelligence, digital inclusion, circular economy systems and climate adaptation require greater integration within SDG research. Understanding how these evolving trends influence the interactions among energy, employment, innovation, inequality and urban development represents an important avenue for future scholarship.

4. Conclusions

The present review examined the Prosperity cluster of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 7–11) through an integrated analysis of affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry and innovation, reduced inequalities, and sustainable cities and communities. Drawing on peer-reviewed and gray literature identified through a structured review process, the study explored how economic dynamism, environmental innovation, and social inclusion interact to shape pathways toward sustainable prosperity.

The findings demonstrate that the Prosperity SDGs are highly interconnected and cannot be effectively understood or implemented in isolation. Progress in renewable energy systems contributes not only to environmental sustainability but also to employment creation, technological innovation, and improved living standards. Similarly, advances in infrastructure and innovation can stimulate economic growth and urban development, yet their long-term contribution to prosperity depends on equitable access to opportunities and resources. Across all reviewed themes, inequality emerged as a recurring challenge capable of constraining progress and limiting the distribution of sustainability benefits.

A central contribution of this review is the identification of prosperity as a multidimensional outcome emerging from the interaction of economic, environmental, and social systems. The evidence indicates that technological advancement and eco-

nomic growth alone are insufficient to achieve sustainable prosperity if they are not accompanied by inclusive governance, social protection, and environmental stewardship. Likewise, environmental initiatives are most effective when integrated with employment creation, infrastructure development, and measures aimed at reducing social disparities.

The review also highlights important regional differences in the implementation of SDGs 7–11. Developed economies tend to focus on decarbonization, innovation ecosystems, and smart-city development, while emerging and developing countries often prioritize energy access, infrastructure expansion, employment generation, and institutional strengthening. These findings suggest that although the objectives of the Prosperity cluster are universal, the pathways toward achieving them are highly context-specific and require differentiated policy approaches that reflect national development conditions.

From a theoretical perspective, the reviewed literature draws upon diverse frameworks including sustainable development theory, socio-technical transition theory, innovation systems approaches, social justice perspectives, and urban resilience frameworks. However, the review also reveals that many studies remain policy-oriented and descriptive, with limited theoretical integration across SDGs. This represents an important opportunity for future research to develop more comprehensive conceptual models capable of explaining the interactions, synergies, and trade-offs among prosperity-related goals.

Several research gaps were identified. Future studies should place greater emphasis on comparative analyses across different geographical and socioeconomic contexts, particularly in low-income countries and vulnerable regions where evidence remains limited. There is also a need for more longitudinal and theory-driven research examining how energy transitions, digitalization, innovation systems, inequality reduction, and urban sustainability interact over time. Emerging topics such as artificial intelligence, circular economy systems, digital inclusion, and climate adaptation warrant further investigation due to their growing influence on prosperity-related outcomes.

This review is subject to several limitations. First, only English-language sources were included, which may have excluded relevant studies published in other languages. Second, although multiple databases and gray literature sources were consulted, some publications may not have been captured by the search strategy. Third, the review adopted a thematic synthesis approach rather than a quantitative meta-analysis, limiting the ability to compare effect sizes across studies. Finally, the reviewed literature spans diverse geographical, economic, and institutional contexts, which may affect the generalizability of certain findings. Nevertheless, the inclusion of both peer-reviewed and policy-oriented sources provides a broad and integrated perspective on the Prosperity Cluster and its role within sustainable development.

Overall, the review demonstrates that sustainable prosperity cannot be achieved through isolated interventions or narrow measures of economic performance. Long-term prosperity requires integrated strategies that simultaneously advance economic opportunity, environmental responsibility, and social equity. The Prosperity cluster offers a valuable framework for understanding these interdependencies and highlights the importance of coordinated policies, strong institutions, and inclusive governance in advancing sustainable development. Achieving the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda will ultimately depend on the ability of societies to pursue growth that is not only economically productive, but also environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive, ensuring that prosperity is shared across present and future generations.

This study also demonstrates the value of employing an integrative literature review approach for examining the Prosperity cluster (SDGs 7–11). Unlike bibliometric reviews,

which primarily focus on publication patterns, citation networks and research trends, the integrative review approach enabled the synthesis of diverse forms of evidence, including conceptual, empirical, policy-oriented and interdisciplinary studies. This was particularly important given the complex and interconnected nature of the Prosperity cluster, where understanding the relationships among energy systems, economic development, innovation, inequality and sustainable urbanization required a qualitative assessment of themes, synergies and trade-offs rather than a purely quantitative mapping of the literature. Future research could complement the present findings through bibliometric and scientometric analyses that examine the evolution of scholarship on SDGs 7–11, identify emerging research fronts and map collaboration patterns across regions and disciplines. Such studies would provide a valuable quantitative counterpart to the thematic synthesis presented here.

Supplementary Materials: The following supporting information can be downloaded at: https://www.mdpi.com/article/10.3390/su18136559/s1, Table S1: Included studies retained after eligibility screening and classified according to their primary contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Prosperity cluster themes (SDGs 7–11); Table S2: PRISMA 2020 checklist.

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