

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS: IN BETWEEN COMMUNITY AND NETWORKS

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ABSTRACT

This paper is primarily conceptual. It reconstructs key frameworks that have shaped rural development approaches since the end of World War II; the result is a four-type classification – modernisation, centre-periphery model, endogenous development, and the social network approach – placing the approaches within a semantic and chronological order. After examining their mutual critiques, it is argued that the social network approach represents a culmination in rural development modelling. Recognitions and critiques of the social network approach have prompted productive expansions and developments. These emerging directions include the actor–network theory, the integration of social network approaches with institutional analysis, and the rise of a rural political ecology, yet to be fully codified. Finally, the paper proposes a synthetic model positioned between community and networks, a blend of loyalty to places and openness to distant worlds. Bringing these two classical sociological figures into dialogue generates new perspectives on processes of rural development, like international migrations, urban diasporas, industrial outsourcing, and the raise of social cooperatives.

Keywords: rural development, social network, community, patterns

INTRODUCTION

Rural development has been a major cognitive matrix shaping social analysis and public policy since the post-Second World War period. It is also a performative concept, in the sense that it describes territorial conditions while simultaneously contributing to the formation of collective action (Wang, 2022). Its prominence in public debate has

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fluctuated over time, yet it has repeatedly prompted substantial promotional efforts by local institutions, national governments, and the European Union. In the current phase, however, the concept appears less compelling: it has been displaced, on the one hand, by “local development” and, on the other, by “agribusiness” analyses.

In constructing rural development models, many scholars now seek to move beyond the urban–rural dichotomy and advance a sustained critique of the territorial imbalances produced by capitalist globalisation. Accordingly, new labels have gained traction, including inner, peripheral, remote, marginal, left-behind, and fragile areas. Despite its obsolescence, the term *rural* is retained here because it is more inclusive and broadly applicable than many alternatives, and because it carries both normative ideals of life and strongly negative connotations. It also directs attention to the primary sector as a fundamental mediator between human societies and ecosystems, avoiding the polarities of strict anthropocentrism or ecocentrism. Moreover, “rural” has returned to prominence in large countries such as China and India, where economic divides have widened, and within Western contexts as well, where it has been mobilised in relation to populist politics.

Rural development is strongly dependent on public policy. Within the European Union, the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy remains an autonomous component; there are proposals either to move beyond it or to integrate it more fully into wider territorial and cohesion policies. This trajectory is contested both in institutional arenas and through the mobilisation of farmers’ organisations. The interaction between material processes, political will, and the capacity to name and classify territories therefore remains in constant motion, operating in a circular dynamic. A robust analysis must consider these dimensions together while still pursuing a unifying interpretive frame for rural development. At present, such a master frame appears to be missing, and the primary aim of this paper is to address this gap.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, it reviews a set of rural development approaches, proposing a chronological ordering and identifying a provisional point of arrival. This point is located in social network theories. Second, it introduces critiques of – and extensions to – the claim that social networks can function as a master frame for local development. Finally, it proposes an integrative perspective that connects networks to communities of purpose and place, conceptualised as *networked communities*.

A CHRONOLOGY OF APPROACHES TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

This section develops a framework broad enough to accommodate the main paradigms of rural development (see Figure 1). The territorial dimension of development can be interpreted using two very general variables. First, development can be understood either in terms of the internal characteristics of local areas – more or less predisposed to social change – or as a matter of interdependence among territories that may (or may not) generate development. For example, according to the law of comparative advantage (Tulla, 2019), it is generally efficient to specialise neighbouring areas in differ-

ent products in order to reduce costs and increase the gains derived from reciprocal exchange. This “law” has been sharply criticised by proponents of alternative local development (Fletcher, 2011). Nonetheless, it remains analytically useful because it highlights the pronounced territorial dimension of socio-economic change – here, precisely, the relationships among specialised territories.

The second general variable concerns the relevance of places in processes of change: namely, whether the determining factors are exogenous or endogenous (Maddock, 2021), also described as universal or context-specific. In economic thought, for a long period three drivers of development were treated as universally valid: capital, labour, and technology (Solow, 1969). Over time, additional drivers were incorporated (e.g., market inclusion, information, and infrastructure), yet they were still largely framed as universally applicable (Russo, 2017).

In sum, the framework distinguishes between (a) general versus context-specific characteristics of places, and (b) territorial development as primarily internal rather than relational. Intersecting these dimensions make it possible to construct a classification of development models (Figure 1). That yields a four-cell typology within which the main strands of rural development scholarship can be situated. When analysis focuses on individual areas and emphasises supposedly universal factors, we find modernisation approaches. When development dynamics are attributed primarily to interactions among areas, but the determining factors are still considered universal, we encounter dependency approaches and the more familiar dualistic centre–periphery models¹. Subsequent approaches include comparative historical analyses which focus on individual areas and stress context-specific factors; comparability here does not imply interaction among areas, but rather the presence (or absence) of shared features. Finally, the most recent models draw on social network perspectives, as they emphasise both locally specific development factors and frequent exchanges among areas that are not necessarily contiguous or embedded within a single system.

Modernisation theories occupy a specific historical moment: the 1950s and 1960s, during decolonisation and the Cold War competition between blocs (USA vs USSR) over the performance of their respective production systems (Trigilia, 2002). In this context, a Western vision of development took shape as a universal process proceeding through stages and relying on a set of core components: the strengthening of state administration, the diffusion of entrepreneurial values, and industrialisation. From a sociological standpoint, the theoretical backbone of this perspective is often associated with Talcott Parsons’ pattern variables (Parsons, 1971). Modernisation theory also developed within political analysis (Huntington, 1966), studies of communication and learning (Shah, 2010), and later within debates on ecological policy (Cunha Dias et al., 2020).

¹ According to Boudon and Bourricaud (1982), approaches indicate a general vision of society and are synonymous with paradigms, models, schemes, while theories are specific statements subject to empirical verification.

Parsons’ pattern variables – Ascription versus Achievement, Particularism versus Universalism, Diffuseness versus Specificity, Affectivity versus Affective Neutrality, and Collective Orientation versus Self-Orientation – capture the tension between remaining within a traditional social order and embracing modernity. Beyond these dilemmas, Parsons also identified “evolutionary universals” characteristic of modern societies – bureaucracy, associations, legal systems, and the market–money nexus – understood as a “complex of structures and associated processes” whose development increases the long-term adaptive capacity of social systems (Parsons, 1964, pp. 340–341).

Scope of analysis		
	Individual area profile	Interaction between areas
Common (or exogenous)	Modernization: Development as overcoming socio-cultural constraints of individuals (cultural studies)	Dependency: Development as a liberation from unbalanced market exchanges (centre-periphery models)
Factors of development		
Typical (or endogenous)	Comparative Historical Analysis: Development as enhancement of internal resources (path dependency)	Social networks: Development as ability to establish relationships on different levels and with the outside world

Figure 1. Framework of main approaches to local development according to two general variables

Source: (Carrosio & Osti, 2017)

Parsons’ framework has been challenged by scholars working within Marxist-inspired approaches to development (Shah, 2010). Their critique rests on two core claims. First, it is not primarily culture but the economy – especially processes of capital accumulation – that drives development. Second, development is less a matter of countries adapting to “modern” standards than the outcome of enduring, asymmetric relationships between core and peripheral countries. As in modernisation theory, dependency theory posits a single, universal causal domain (the economy), but it shifts the unit of analysis: territories are not considered in isolation, but at minimum as relationally constituted through interaction.

The *dependency* approach (Hout, 2016) emphasises dependence in technology transfer, financial capital, and marketing channels. In structurally disadvantaged countries, technological packages are adopted but neither developed nor controlled locally. Financial asymmetries are profound, both in levels of accumulation and in access to credit. In addition, an oligopolistic structure of commercial intermediaries – largely located in developed countries – renders the rules of a “free market” largely fictitious. Hierarchies also emerge among firms through relations of sub-contracting or outsourcing (De Toni & Grandinetti, 2001), producing chains in which firms at the bottom have little scope to contract orders independently with third parties. Wallerstein (2004) describes this configuration as a relationship between oligopolies in core countries and predominantly competitive markets in peripheral countries.

Two further corollaries follow, echoing Marx’s notion of superstructure. First, cultural colonisation occurs when poorer countries uncritically absorb both the acquisitive values of core countries and a perception of their own inferiority.

Second, peripheral elites and bureaucracies are portrayed as culturally subservient and, above all, vulnerable to co-optation by powerful Northern multinationals. As a result, a legal–rational administration capable of autonomously managing public goods and catalysing endogenous development is argued not to have emerged. In this reading, the bourgeoisie of the Global South is depicted as having “betrayed” its historical role. Like modernisation theory, dependency perspectives – precisely because of their universalising claims – are applied across multiple territorial scales: not only to North–South relations, but also to relations among Western countries and within them, where “left-behind” areas persist.

The perspective changes if we move to the lower cells of Figure 1. When analysis foregrounds the specific characteristics of a single territory, explanatory models are commonly described as historical–comparative (Mahoney, 2015). In this tradition, the number of cases to analyse decreases, while the range of explanatory factors increases (Osinsky & Eloranta, 2014). Two levels of analysis can be distinguished. At the first level, classic works by Weber (1905), Moore (1966), Rokkan (1999), and Eisenstadt (1990) explain developmental differences through long-term processes such as the Protestant Reformation, national unification, and the timing of transitions away from feudalism. The analytical scheme is no longer dualistic but multidimensional: it identifies several irreducible variables whose combinations generate ideal types against which empirical cases can be situated. This mode of analysis resembles approaches used in research on the varieties of welfare states (Streeck & Thelen, 2005).

At a more fine-grained level – since, for Weber, ideal types can be constructed at different degrees of generality – historical–comparative analyses have also been used to account for the more recent development trajectories of regions outside the North Atlantic core. This includes Japan, followed by the “Asian Tigers”, as well as other more recent emerging economies (Hansen & Wethal, 2015). In this context, development theories have incorporated local dimensions that move beyond the classical economic inputs of capital, labour, and technology. They emphasize the role of knowledge and the constellation of interests shaped by the direction of local institutions (often discussed within *comparative political economy*). The emphasis on knowledge as a development factor is reflected in the extensive literature on the knowledge economy (Foray, 2000), institutionalised in the Lisbon European Council’s 2000 strategy, and mobilised in some local development studies in the Global South (Romero-Rodríguez et al., 2020). Within this broad focus on knowledge, it is useful to distinguish between human capital (skills and professional expertise) and innovation capacity.

On the one hand, extensive empirical evidence links higher levels of education to economic development (Antonelli, 2003). Rural areas tend to display lower educational attainment, both because they often lack upper-secondary schools and because more highly educated young people migrate to urban centres. On the other hand, innovation can be stimulated by organisational arrangements such as the creation of technology parks (Ciciotti & Rizzi, 2005), by the role of cities as hubs of creativity and knowledge (Florida, 2008), and by proximity to industrial districts (Ganesan et al., 2005).

Comparative political economy seeks to combine two elements: the configuration of organised interests and the presence of development-oriented institutions (Trigilia, 2002). The literature on varieties of capitalism describes development as a compromise between capital and labour, enabled by intensive institutional mediation aimed at securing broad-based welfare. Comparative political economy extends this lens across territorial scales, with particular attention to local ones. This includes cases of local or meso-corporatism (Osti, 2023) and situations in which local firms and institutions form pacts to ensure that knowledge spillovers remain local (Döring & Schnellenbach, 2006), alongside targeted infrastructure and services conceptualised as local public goods (Fujita, 1989). In such configurations, interest groups and trade unions may support professionalisation and higher wages in exchange for workplace consent and political support in elected regional councils.

Analytically, comparative political economy can therefore be read as a variant of historical-comparative approaches, with a stronger emphasis on local exchange. Each area arrives at distinctive compromises between enterprises and institutions, which may be more or less conducive to economic growth. These tacit or formalised pacts can also extend beyond the locality: they may scale up to the national level, as in state-led development strategies, or connect to other areas through functional linkages. A salient example is the relocation of production to lower-income countries by both large and smaller multinational firms. Outsourcing, however, is not inherently detrimental; its effects depend on whether broader welfare and education agreements are in place with local authorities and trade unions (Bloor & Sampson, 2009).

In such cases, neither the centre-periphery schema nor institutional approaches fully capture the complexity of inter-territorial relations. For this reason, it is useful to speak of social network approaches. This leads to the final family of territorial development models (Figure 1). Unlike dualistic frameworks, network perspectives render regional imbalance less central. In weaker areas, one finds not only dependence and socio-environmental dumping, but also the valorisation of local manufacturing traditions, the search for new markets, and the emergence of novel managerial capabilities. Networking can reduce hierarchies as it multiplies the channels and terms of exchange (Wellman, 1999). A local community may be weaker on one dimension (e.g., material resources) but stronger on another (e.g., education). Moreover, actors positioned as “weaker” may negotiate strategically, thereby increasing their leverage. In this way, dependence can shift towards interdependence.

At a theoretical level, development is explained as the capacity of socially cohesive areas to reduce transaction costs through high levels of trust among local economic actors. Trust is treated as a context-specific quality nurtured through frequent, relatively symmetrical personal relations. The reduction of dependence is attributed to a judicious combination of locally rooted factors and relational capacity (Redhead & Power, 2022). This framework appears well suited to explaining cities that gain prominence through the acquisition of international events (such as the Olympic Games) or substantial funding flows. It also helps account for the trajectories of certain tourist destinations (Carrosio et al., 2019) and agricultural areas (Menozzi et al., 2022): places that were

initially small and marginal but succeeded in mobilising internal resources and entering international circuits (Zaniboni, 2009). Local institutions – public, private, or hybrid – can “capture” external resources through relational capabilities combined with cultural factors such as local pride or a strong collective identity.

A key theoretical advantage of social network approaches is their ability to consider, simultaneously, the distinct identities of actors (or nodes) and their processes of identification with others. Identity and identification can be understood as universal polar needs that are partially reconciled within dense relational networks (Turner & Reynolds, 2012). More symmetrical relations, in this view, can preserve particular identities while also securing recognition within wider collectivities.

This fourth approach explains local development in several ways:

- Social networks foster trust and thereby reduce transaction costs.
- They facilitate the circulation of information (e.g., R&D and innovation, job opportunities, and tacit knowledge).
- They strengthen the recognition of locally distinctive products, which can then command price premiums.

The underlying claim is that open and trusting relationships make exchanges of various kinds – values, skills, money, and mutual support – more fluid, rapid, and adaptable, with benefits for both economic performance and community welfare. This view stands in clear contrast to rational choice approaches, in which collective benefit is expected to emerge from the aggregation of self-interested individual actions. The advantages of strong local networks, however, should not be treated as a dogma; they must be translated into indicators and verified empirically.

It is therefore useful to clarify what is meant by *social networks*, and how they differ from other social formations. Here, we adopt both a strong and a weak definition, echoing Granovetter’s distinction between strong and weak ties (Granovetter, 1973). In the strong sense, social networks are constituted through “gift exchange”, in line with a long tradition of anthropological scholarship. In the weak sense, social networks refer to a distinctive social structure that emerges from stable, patterned contacts among nodes (Piselli, 1995).

The network paradigm has long been used to explain rural development, either in its entirety or through specific mechanisms (Murdoch, 2000; Marquardt et al., 2012; Esparcia & Serrano, 2016). It is also widely considered applicable across both the Global North and the Global South. Recent studies using network analysis of rural communities examine, for example, empowerment models, rural development programmes, gender approaches, and the capacity building of farmer groups (Choibar Tridakusumah et al., 2023), as well as relationships among non-contiguous communities (Mantino, 2022).

Given the prominence of this paradigm, it is equally important to highlight its limitations. Social networks can facilitate collusion or favouritism, benefiting individuals and groups whose public standing may be neither transparent nor deserving. At the extreme, patron–client relations and organised gangs are also social networks. Networks may generate solidarity, but they can also produce exclusion,

particularly for those who lack specific relational skills or do not hold high-status positions. In most cases, relationships are categorical (Hannerz, 1990), whereas relations of pure sociability – in Simmel’s sense – are relatively rare and episodic (Simmel, 1984). It follows that intersections among people and networks, and among networks themselves, can generate closed and overlapping circles (Simmel, 1908), “black holes” (Burt, 1992), and subtle yet consequential hierarchies (Shucksmith, 2012; Gkartzios & Lowe, 2019).

BEYOND NETWORK APPROACHES IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

In the previous section, we argued that the most substantial advance in models for analysing rural development has been the turn to social networks. Networks have become not only an analytical framework (Lowe et al., 1995; OECD, 2006), but also a development ideal and a metric for evaluation (Ennis & West, 2013). Given the breadth of functions attributed to social networks, it becomes crucial to examine how this paradigm has evolved. Several responses are possible: (a) expanding networks to include additional objects and processes; (b) more clearly formalising the relationship between networks and institutions; and (c) returning to one-dimensional models in which a dominant factor operates even within ostensibly “flat” social networks (Figure 2).

The first response extends networks to include non-human entities, and proposes a semantic alignment between nodes and processes beyond individual subjectivities and conventional social structures. In essence, this is the foundation of Bruno Latour’s actor–network theory (Latour, 2005). Within rural studies, this approach was first introduced by Murdoch (2000), and later systematised through the ETUDE project (*Enlarging the Theoretical Understanding of Rural Development*), funded by the European Commission under the Sixth Framework Programme (van der Ploeg et al., 2008). The resulting “rural web” framework is arguably the most systematic and comprehensive attempt to articulate a theory of rural development for Europe. It specifies six dimensions: endogeneity, novelty production, sustainability, social capital, institutional arrangements, and market governance.

A recent systematic literature review suggests that use of the rural web framework is declining and that it displays a territorial bias: it has rarely been applied in developing-country contexts (Addai et al., 2023). In Italy, for example, Berti (2009) applied the framework in his doctoral thesis, arguing that a “differentiated countryside” emerges from the mobilisation of local resources (territorial capital) through the activation of networks. His case study concerns a valorisation circuit for a native sheep breed in Lunigiana (Tuscany, Italy). In this case, however, the model did not enable “an in-depth analysis of how [the dynamics of integration–conflict] combine and how this construction and combination determines the mobilisation of local resources” (Berti, 2009, p. 236). It is therefore unsurprising that, despite considerable theoretical refinement, the analytical yield can remain relatively generic. Actor–network theory, which inspires the ETUDE framework, does not provide a pre-

-specified hierarchical ordering of processes and nodes (Elder-Vass, 2008). In rural contexts, this may result in analyses that observe only a weak alignment around the valorisation of a single “typical” local product.

The second path concerns the possibility of “fertilising” network analysis with institutional analysis. Owen-Smith and Powell (2008) develop this agenda through three core claims: (a) ties and institutions are recursively related; (b) concepts from economic sociology – such as institutional logics, organisational fields, embeddedness, and social capital – can serve as bridging tools; and (c) the key elements to examine are formal attributions (or categories) and relational practices. However, they do not advance a fully testable theory, and instead re-read their previous research through this combined lens. Empirical work explicitly pursuing this integration remains limited, and the recursion between networks and institutions is often left implicit.

For example, in a study exploring ties connecting managers to intra-firm, inter-organisational, and community contacts, Oppen (2023) reports three relevant findings: first, there is increasing evidence that recruiting individuals whose networks “match” their position and tasks can improve corporate performance; second, emerging organisational networks often follow or mirror the personal networks of strategic decision makers; and third, the value of relational ties in selecting business partners and implementing strategies tends to be amplified in contexts where formal institutions and monitoring agencies are weak.

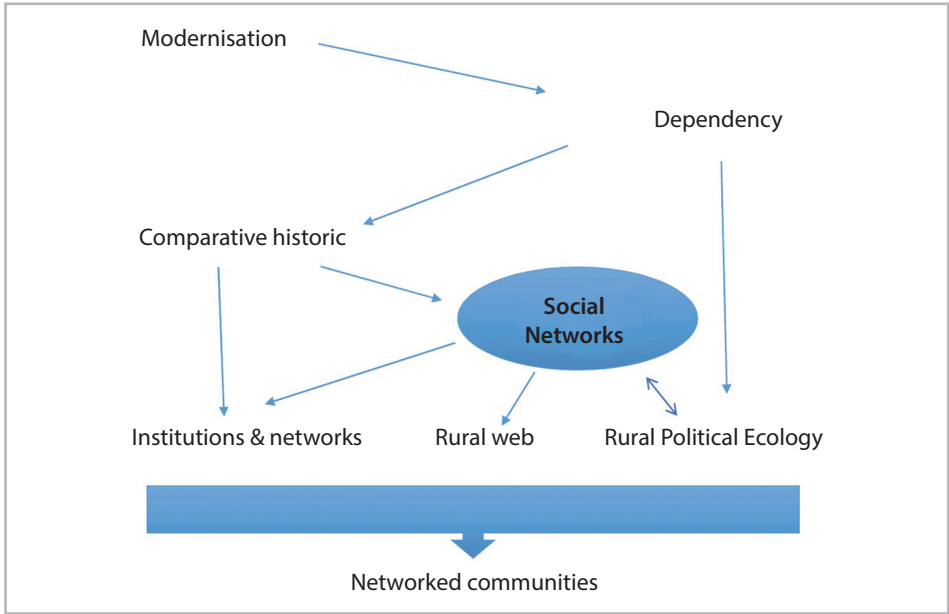


Figure 2. Evolution of theories of rural development

Source: Author’s elaboration

Rural development is addressed more directly in Meador's (2019) paper, which distinguishes between implicit and explicit networks and examines how the former can support the latter. The methodological and pedagogical value of informal networks had already been recognised in earlier work; Meador's contribution, however, foregrounds a crucial and often overlooked domain in rural development: market institutions. Consider, for example, the concept of *nested markets*. It highlights how exchanges of equivalents are embedded within shared values and rules that shape both price formation and the distribution of profits (Osti & Carrosio, 2020). In other words, social platforms emerge in which market regulation is frequently defined by actors themselves – including consumers – and is supported to varying degrees by local authorities. Farmers' markets provide a clear example of this dynamic (Török et al., 2024), as do community cooperatives that emerge in remote rural areas (Mastronardi & Romagnoli, 2020). It is therefore unsurprising that these concepts have been applied to social entrepreneurship (Lang & Fink, 2019) and to rural development projects that rely heavily on NGOs (Osti & Jachia, 2020). In this view, social networks are largely constituted by ties that are simultaneously voluntary and rule-bound, sometimes becoming codified within formal institutions – such as the collective property regimes analysed by Ostrom (1990).

This brings us to a third route for addressing the limitations of network analysis. It can be read as a return to classical rural development paradigms, and is exemplified by the contemporary success of political ecology. An urban variant is already institutionalised, including through a dedicated journal (*Urban Political Ecology*), whereas a clearly codified rural counterpart remains less established (Chiu, 2020). This suggests that the corpus of rural political ecology is comparatively less consolidated and that terminological identification remains more contested (Walker, 2003; Paniagua, 2019; Sankar, 2022).

(Rural) political ecology rests on three core elements. First, as noted earlier, it insists that relations of power and domination persist even within development-oriented social networks that present themselves as democratic, inclusive, and attentive to marginalised people and places. Second, it places stronger emphasis on food production and food marketing than much traditional rural sociology, which tends to focus on farmers and farms as social actors. In this context, scholars discuss community-scale food sovereignty (Steckley, 2025), a dimension often neglected by food multinationals and, at times, by national governments. Third, it directs particular attention to natural resources, approached primarily through a redistributive lens rather than an ecological one – so much so that some critics argue that social justice concerns sometimes overshadow strictly environmental dynamics (Walker, 2005).

An additional contribution of this approach – one that in several respects echoes themes from dependency theory (Figure 2) – concerns the role of expert knowledge. Rural political ecology frequently adopts a strongly critical stance towards technocratic expertise, both in relation to the devaluation of traditional local knowledge and the promises attached to digitalisation (Alarcón-Ferrari et al., 2023). Alongside

oligopolies over agricultural inputs and marketing channels, it identifies more subtle forms of control over practices and conduct, often analysed through a governmentality lens (Stoustrup, 2021; Ezeudu & Ezekwelu, 2024). In this spirit, the literature also expresses scepticism towards national governments' tendency to delegate service provision in rural areas to NGOs (Shucksmith, 2012). This reading of NGOs differs markedly from that in the previous strand of work, where NGOs were framed as key mediators between informal networks and formal institutions.

CONCLUSIONS: IN BETWEEN COMMUNITY AND NETWORKS

The recent evolution of rural development models has largely confirmed the importance of social networks, even within more critical approaches such as political ecology (Figure 2). This is likely because social webs, imbued with normative meanings, embody a powerful and difficult-to-avoid ideal of modern societies: the elective character of social relationships. This intuition is captured well by Wellman and colleagues' concept of *networked individualism*, which describes the contemporary desire for social ties – provided that they are freely chosen and experienced as voluntary (Wellman et al., 2003).

Networks, however, have also been shown to display recurrent flaws and potential degenerations: they may become exclusive, collusive, and covertly hierarchical. A further limitation is that many modern networks are spatially elusive; that is, they tend to evade responsibility for members' places of residence. As Wellman (1999) puts it, “communities are far-flung social networks and not local neighbourhood solidarities” (p. xiii). High electiveness enables the construction of robust and meaningful ties regardless of location; with the expansion of internet connectivity, indifference to place has been further amplified (Wellman et al., 2003).

This brings the problem of collective action on behalf of territories back into focus: why, and on what grounds, should actors be bound to pursue a common good *here and now*? In liberal-democratic contexts, this task is typically assigned to public institutions, which establish rights and duties – including duties of solidarity – through instruments such as progressive taxation and redistributive measures for disadvantaged areas. In civil and religious spheres such “obligations” are often anchored in the local community, understood as a form of spiritual and material sharing tied to a place of residence. The notion of community has long been treated ambivalently in the social sciences: it has been analysed both as a coercive mechanism that constrains individuals (Goffman, 1971/1961; Odrowaz-Coates, 2015) and as an ideal of life and work (Etzioni, 1994; Fava, 2020).

In rural contexts, the coercive side of community has often been mitigated by allowing people to migrate, while the idealised side has been represented by neo-rural trajectories and imaginaries (Sallustio, 2018). Yet newcomers do not resolve this ambivalence, because they are typically few in number and – above all – volatile, subject to a legitimate electiveness in both residence and work. Rural development models must therefore confront the tensions inherent in *both* community

and social networks. One way forward is to move beyond Tönnies' (1887) classic community–society dichotomy and to develop a new contrast between residential community and “non-overlapping” social circles (Simmel, 1908) – that is, between deep dwelling and high mobility.

Spatial mobility clearly plays a central role (Hedberg & do Carmo, 2012). Through transport systems, road infrastructure, and exposure to other places, rural residents can create *networked communities* – that is, formations combining voluntary association with territorial rootedness, freedom to leave and place attachment, polygamy of residences and places of choice (Bischof, 2023). Rural development models, in both their analytical and normative components, should therefore identify the psychological, social, and territorial conditions that enable networked communities. In this respect, research on place attachment (Birnbbaum et al., 2021), on aspirations of “restanza” (Teti, 2022), on the rooting of international migrants in remote areas (Membretti & Viazzo, 2017), and on urban diaspora spaces (Brøgger, 2019) is particularly instructive.

It would also be valuable to strengthen research on rural areas affected by industrial relocation, in order to assess whether networked communities develop across the very territories linked by outsourcing relationships – for example, between originating areas and destination areas (Bloor & Sampson, 2009). This raises further questions: whether, and how, trade unions in strong industrial regions address workers' rights in outsourced locations and attempt to support at least minimal forms of union organisation there. Similar expectations could be directed towards NGOs (Chiu, 2020).

In conclusion, the key question is whether contemporary rural transformations are converging on prevailing *networked individualism* or whether they are fostering new social formations that can be conceptualised as *networked communities*. The latter could potentially function as a master frame for rural development, provided that concepts and methodologies are specified more rigorously than is possible within the scope of this paper.

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WZORCE ROZWOJU OBSZARÓW WIEJSKICH: POMIĘDZY SPOŁECZNOŚCIĄ A SIECIAMI

ABSTRAKT

W artykule, mającym formę koncepcyjną, zrekonstruowano kluczowe ramy kształtujące podejście do rozwoju obszarów wiejskich od zakończenia II wojny światowej. Efektem jest wyróżnienie czterech rodzajów tego podejścia – tj. modernizacji, modelu centrum–peryferia, rozwoju endogenego oraz podejścia sieci społecznej – oraz ich uporządkowanie semantyczne i chronologiczne. Podejście oparte na sieci społecznej wydaje się stanowić kulminację procesu modelowania rozwoju obszarów wiejskich. Zarówno akceptacja, jak i krytyka analizy sieci społecznych dały impuls do jej dalszego rozwoju. W efekcie powstały nowe kierunki badawcze, do których należą: teoria aktora–sieci, łączenie sieci społecznych z analizą instytucji oraz rozwój wiejskiej ekologii politycznej, która nie została jeszcze w pełni skodyfikowana. W artykule zaproponowano m.in. syntetyczny model

podejścia do rozwoju obszarów wiejskich plasujący się pomiędzy społecznością a sieciami, łączący lojalność wobec miejsc i otwartość na odległe światy. Wprowadzenie tych dwóch klasycznych postaci socjologicznych do dialogu tworzy nowe perspektywy dla procesów rozwoju obszarów wiejskich, takie jak migracje międzynarodowe, miejskie diaspory, outsourcing przemysłowy czy rozwój spółdzielni społecznych.

Słowa kluczowe: rozwój obszarów wiejskich, sieć społeczna, społeczność, wzorzec