

COUNTRY–CITY AND RURAL–URBAN RELATIONS IN THE TWENTIETH-FIRST CENTURY

AS RELAÇÕES CAMPO/CIDADE E RURAL/URBANO NO SÉCULO XXI

RELACIONES CAMPO / CIUDAD Y RURAL / URBANO EN EL SIGLO XXI

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The thought regarding the countryside/city relationship in modern times implies going beyond the past representations concerning the rural space, that is, overcoming the dichotomic proposal, conceived within a context of reaffirmation of the urban logic, and thus recognizing the city and the city/countryside couplet as elements bonded by the same, though diverse, logic, typical of the space production under the rule of capitalism. **Objective:** The work aims at systemizing a reflection on the countryside/city and rural/urban couplets, based on the understanding that the countryside and the city may be associated to the same flow of spatial production insofar as the terms rural and urban are articulated with each other, involving subjective aspects as identity, form and rhythm of life, relation with nature and social interactions among the agents that reproduce (or even reinvent) such subjectivities. **Results:** In spite of the dissociation between the rural/urban and countryside/city binomials, the academic debate can still find traces of the previous paradigm from the observation of territories whose rural/rural and city/urban association coincide. **Conclusion:** As the countryside and the city are consolidated as material structures based on the patterns of land-use and occupation, the rural and the urban transit to the immaterial sphere becoming constructions and social practices - both dynamic and changeable - that can occur both in the countryside and the city alike. This enables the existence of localities presenting aspects related both to the rural and the urban contexts, such as urbanized fields and rural cities, bearing in mind that these aspects (urbanities and ruralities) do not concern the technological level itself, but the constructions and social practices that sustain the urban or rural characters (or both).

Keywords: Country–city relations; rural versus urban; geographical networks.

RESUMO

Introdução: Pensar a relação entre campo e cidade, no período hodierno, significa ultrapassar a representação pretérita sobre o espaço rural, ou seja, superar a proposta dicotômica, pensada/inserida em um contexto de afirmação da lógica urbana, e reconhecer a cidade e o campo como elementos integrados por uma lógica única, porém diversa, própria da produção do espaço soba égide do capitalismo. **Objetivo:** sistematizar uma reflexão sobre os pares campo/cidade e rural/urbano, a partir da constatação de que campo e cidade podem se mostrar associadas a um mesmo fluxo de produção espacial à medida que os termos rural e urbano articulam-se muito mais a aspectos subjetivos como a identidade, modo (e ritmo) de vida, relação com a natureza e pelas interações sociais entre os agentes que reproduzem (ou mesmo reinventam) estas subjetividades. **Resultados:** Assim, mesmo com a dissociação entre os pares rural/urbano e campo/cidade, o debate acadêmico ainda pode se encontrar com vestígios do paradigma anterior a partir da observação de territórios cuja associação campo/rural e cidade/urbano coincidam. **Resultados:** Na medida em que o campo e a cidade se consolidam como estruturas materiais fundamentadas no uso e ocupação da terra, o rural e o urbano passam para a esfera imaterial compondo construções e práticas sociais – ambas de caráter dinâmico e mutável – que podem ocorrer tanto no campo quanto na cidade. Isto possibilita a existência de localidades com aspectos relacionados tanto ao rural quanto ao urbano (como campos urbanizados e cidades rurais), com atenção que estes aspectos (urbanidades e ruralidades) não dizem respeito ao nível tecnológico em si, mas às

 Glaucio José Marafon^a

 Gabriel Bias Fortes^b

 Rogério Seabra^b

^a Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil

^b Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil

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Correspondência:
glaucomarafon@hotmail.com

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construções e práticas sociais que sustentam o caráter de urbano ou rural (ou ambos).

Palavras-chave: Relações campo x cidade; rural x urbano; redes geográficas.

RESUMEN

Introducción: Pensar en la relación entre campo y ciudad, en la época moderna, significa ir más allá de la representación pasada sobre el espacio rural, es decir, superar la propuesta dicotómica, pensada / insertada en un contexto de afirmación de la lógica urbana, y reconocer la ciudad y el campo de la ciudad como elementos integrados por una lógica única pero diversa, propia de la producción del espacio bajo la égida del capitalismo. **Objetivo:** sistematizar una reflexión sobre los pares campo / ciudad y rural / urbano, a partir de la observación de que el campo y la ciudad pueden asociarse a un mismo flujo de producción espacial ya que los términos rural y urbano se articulan mucho más entre sí. aspectos como la identidad, la forma (y ritmo) de vida, la relación con la naturaleza y las interacciones sociales entre los agentes que reproducen (o incluso reinventan) estas subjetividades. **Resultados:** Así, incluso con la disociación entre los pares rural / urbano y campo / ciudad, el debate académico aún puede encontrar rastros del paradigma anterior a partir de la observación de territorios cuya asociación rural / rural y ciudad / urbana coinciden. **Conclusion:** A medida que el campo y la ciudad se consolidan como estructuras materiales basadas en el uso y ocupación del suelo, lo rural y lo urbano pasan a la esfera inmaterial componiendo construcciones y prácticas sociales, tanto dinámicas como cambiantes, que pueden darse tanto en el campo y en la ciudad. Esto posibilita la existencia de localidades con aspectos relacionados tanto a lo rural como a lo urbano (como campos urbanizados y ciudades rurales), teniendo en cuenta que estos aspectos (urbanidades y ruralidades) no conciernen al nivel tecnológico en sí, sino a las construcciones y prácticas sociales que mantener el carácter urbano o rural (o ambos).

Palavras-Clave: Relaciones campo x ciudad; rural versus urbano; redes geográficas.



INTRODUCTION

To think of the relationship between the country and the city these days means to overcome the past representation of the rural space, that is, to overcome a dichotomous proposal conceived/situated in a context of affirmation of the urban logic. It means, too, to recognize the city and the country as elements integrated through a unique but diverse logic: that one typical of the production of the space in capitalism.

Questions such as *what is the country–the city?* and *what is the rural–urban?* have been permeating academic studies since the dichotomous paradigm (and direct associations such as country to rural, city to urban) proved to be no longer enough to understand the spatial reproduction dynamics observed in what was understood as being country and city. The main cause of paradigm breakthrough may be the space dynamic character, which reproduces itself influenced by a territorial order and a hegemonic production model at a given historical moment.

What was, however, the understanding of country–city and rural–urban relations before the paradigm breakthrough? The understanding of the urban used to regard industrial production, population agglomeration in large cities, and a direct relationship with the city. The rural was understood according to the farming production and the dispersion of the form of the country. One adds to such direct association (country–rural, city–urban) the idea that the urban represented modernity, technology and quality of life, while the rural represented backwardness, precariousness and absence of infrastructure and services.

In last century's first half, Sorokin, Zimmerman and Galpin (1986) expressed this conception partially. They associated the rural environment with the farming environment by identifying rural and urban societies in view of their members' functional occupation: farming activities *versus* industrial activities, commercial activities, etc. As these authors said,

The main criterion to define rural population or rural society is the occupational one: gathering, plant cultivation and livestock farming. Through it, rural society differs from other populations, particularly the urban one, which is involved in diverse occupational activities. In this sense, rural sociology is, firstly, the sociology of an occupational group, which means the sociology of agricultural occupation. Such difference between rural and urban communities follows a series of other differences, most of which being casually linked to this difference in occupation (SOROKIN, ZIMMERMAN, GALPIN, 1986, p. 200).

At first, the breakthrough of the direct association paradigm came from the expansion of technique and capital towards the country. The hegemonic production model begins to reproduce itself with greater intensity in the country and transforms this latter by endowing it with elements linked only to the city, to the urban way of life. Such elements include industrialization (especially agro-industry), bank credit (aimed at the "rural" sector), infrastructure, and high-tech machinery. There was a territorial reordering guided by a



logic of rationalization that — as Santos (2006, p. 206) wrote — alters social relations in the country and in what was conceived as being the rural environment.

This author discusses the process of country modernization as it follows:

It is true that for a long time one wrote, in the Brazilian case, that the country was hostile to capital, an obstacle to its dissemination. Today, however, what we see is the opposite. The country welcomes new capital and disseminates it quickly, with all that is implied, which is to say, new technological forms, new organizational forms, new occupational forms, all set up quickly. It is a trend clearly noticeable in the most economically advanced areas but present in those less advanced subspaces as well (SANTOS, 2013, p. 43).

It should be noted, however, that the modernization process Santos mentions was neither homogeneous nor peaceful. The expansion of the model has reached territories unequally (and still does), with distinct intensities, which creates what Santos (2006) called luminous spaces (territory intensely modified by this logic of spatial reproduction) and opaque spaces (territory scarcely hit or even neglected). Specifically in the country, some spaces change according to such logic, while others are virtually unchanged (and others change with different intensities of modification). This transformation happened in conflicting ways as well (and it still does). In the country, it meant land expropriation, land grabbing and alterations in the natural landscape (deforestation, soil contamination, and change in water flow). Conflicts and changes' different intensities, in addition to their consequences, interfere directly with social relations and its social actors who used to inhabit these places taken as rural ones.

Transformations such as the expansion of non-agricultural activities (RUA, 2006; MARAFON, 2010) and the pluriactivity of workers (DEL GROSSI; SILVA, 1995; SILVA, 1997) were remarkable as well. When one addresses the theme of pluriactivity, one considers that people who previously dealt only with farming activities turn out to perform other part-time activities (mainly in the commercial and service sectors). This phenomenon may be rooted both in the diminishing of activities' time demand through more advanced techniques and in the need of supplementing family's subsistence income in the country. In Rio de Janeiro's territory, among non-farming activities Marafon (2010) observed, he highlighted those related to agro-industrial production and the tourism and leisure sector.

One may say the paradigm breakthrough occurs due to the perception of two fundamental elements in the previous conception of country and rural. One element is that, by the expansion of the technique, country is no longer linked to backwardness and absence of infrastructure; it may even present a territorial ordering more effective than in large agglomerations (effective in the context of the predominant spatial production logic). The other element is that the country is no longer taken exclusively for farming output; this means the presence of industrial activity (above all, through agribusiness chain) as well as of tourism and leisure activities (linked to a social imaginary of proximity to nature and to a search for a "rural world").



The possible “fitting” of this paradigm as a platform for scientific analysis and elaboration of public policies fosters a conflict between understandings associated with the idea of rural–urban and country–city relations and understandings that seek to dissociate such dichotomous word combinations in different dimensions of analysis. In Brazil, the reading of certain studies reinforces the associated view. The delimitation of the rural and the urban they made is linked to quantitative and demographic levels — as in Veiga (2002) — and to public authorities actions of urban–rural motivation and aimed at the practiced activity or the agglomeration as a form/structure; examples include taxation (IPTU/ITR¹), rural credit for agricultural production and urban policies directed to the city. More than that, such studies lead even those who discuss the paradigm to repeat the country–rural link and city–urban link. As already said, since territories do not change uniformly (or peacefully) within a spatial reproduction model, a spatial analysis may still mirror this paradigm of association between rural–urban and country–city relations.

These remarks on the “partial” overcoming of the country–city paradigm associated with the idea of rural–urban interface leads to two important questions. One question is on the conception of what comes to be the country and the city and the rural and the urban in a scenario of dissociation; another question is on the position of this view regarding the “incomplete overcoming” of the initial paradigm.

It is intended, then, to unlink country–city and rural–urban as dichotomous word pairs in line with findings of Monte-Mór (2006), Rua (2006), Carneiro (2008), Marafon (2010) e Hespanhol (2013), among others. They understand that the country and the city may be associated with the same flow of spatial production (distinctions regard more functions than values) insofar as the rural and the urban articulate much more with subjectivity (identity, life modes and rhythms, relationship with nature) and social interactions between agents that reproduce (or even reinvent) these subjectivities.

COUNTRY, CITY, AND RURAL–URBAN INTERACTIONS: THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF MATERIALITY AND SUBJECTIVITY

For decades, country and farming production shared the same meaning and, above all, several study methodologies. To learn on the country used to mean studying aspects of farming output process as well as its distribution. The productivism hegemony (WOODS, 2011) is only a possible approach to studies and analyses on the country. As a first approach, however, it should always be articulated as a relationship with the city.

The starting point of the debate on the theoretical separation between the country and the rural and the urban and the city includes the understanding of transformations resulting from the overcoming of dichotomy

¹ T. N.: in Brazil, IPTU stands for taxation over urban real estate, while ITR stands for taxation over rural real estate.



and contradiction in favor of an interaction guided by complementarity and by the bond between the country and the city. Besides, changes should overcome the superiority of the urban as morphology and, consequently, as the end of the rural. The articulations correspond to advances and needs for the expanded reproduction of capital, as in the deep integration with financial market by the turning of property into variable income assets, among other possibilities.

Carneiro (2012, p. 25) deals with “forms of sociability” among social actors in the rural space and indicates that specificities of this social interaction pattern produce a dynamic spatiality that has grown distant from the already outdated paralyzed approach to the rural.

A goal is to break with the centrality of agriculture to define patterns of behavior and greater participation of non-agricultural activities in the organization of social relations in rural areas without, however, changing rural particularity and essence. In analyzing the European case, especially France, Carneiro (2012) relates both the moderation of agriculture as centrality for social practices in the country and the modernization of agriculture, in line with the productivist paradox indicated by Woods (2011). In this approach, the country technification alters production speed, increases productivity and reduces the need for workers. From that moment onwards, it (re)appears “forms of space occupation” (p. 34) capable of fostering new representations of the rural space and new sociability practices.

With the permanence of agriculture, rural space symbols, culture and landscape make up other forms of social articulation. They express “ruralities”² associated with country’s current contours of farming and non-farming activities. Thus, as Marafon (2012) states, non-farming activities — above all those regarding nature valorization — are fundamental to build social practices, symbolic, cultural and identity values as well as territorialities interacting with cities.

Carneiro (2012) discusses rurality’s current profile of agents, norms and values interacting in the country. The author necessarily places them in meetings and interactions with urban practices that, according to Rua (2007, p. 276), produce both “multiple territorialities” for agents in the country and in the city and new relations of otherness (MOREIRA, 2005) between representations of the urban and the rural.

As Carneiro (2012, p. 36) argues, “Whether as a way of life and use certain spaces or as a representation that holds an operative content, the rural would not be diluting itself due to symbolic and spatial approximation between city and country”. As a result, there are changes in the rural space: transformations in sociability patterns; new forms, intensities and scales of articulations with urban space; new conflicts and clashes of identity and representations. The rural, however, manages to keep its particularity, especially by maintaining its otherness as to the urban.

² On ruralities, see, for instance, Wanderley (2000), Batista (2011), and Marafon (2012).



Moreira (2005, p. 15) concatenates ruralities with globalization when points out a connection in broader scales for the mediation between country and city. The author deconstructs “absolute identities” typical of Enlightenment rationalism, such as dichotomous differentiation between the rural and the urban, and attaches identity constitution processes to conflicts pertinent to globalization. For the author,

[...] we will be talking of the rural without territory and without nature, as well as of the traditional rural experienced in cities currently. Even if conceived as simulacrum, representations and virtualities, these ruralities are part of reality’s and of contemporary identities’ elements (MOREIRA, 2005, p. 15).

Based on the author’s words, we highlight social interactions in the rural space of the country, understood as the materialization of socio-spatial relations interacting in multiple scales.

Still in view of the concept presented by Carneiro (2012), it is worth mentioning that Moreira (2005) expands the possibility of experiencing ruralities outside the country, because there would be patterns, symbols and behaviors of it being experienced in the city. Similarly, Rua (2002; 2007) proposes the experience of urbanities in the country. Considering the relationship of multiple possibilities of simulating the experience of the rural, Moreira (2005) undoes the modern rural to build a globalization rurality with traces and permanence of the past model; this means re-signified ruralities according to nowadays socioeconomic, technical and spatial parameters — globalization.

Considering what Moreira (2005; 2007) and Rua (2002; 2007) say, we understand urbanities and ruralities as practices — material, immaterial and socio-spatial — that are carried out and experienced in the country and in the city in an articulate way. Sometimes, it is conflicting, other times associated; but it is always generating procedural and hybrid spatiality: in constant formation and with dual characteristics in the country and in the city. Therefore, urbanities and ruralities are neither exclusive practices of an area nor determinants that define and delimit a state, for example. Whether as materialized elements or not, they are territorialities (MARAFON, 2012) in constant exchange and influencing each other in relations between countries and cities articulated by the perspective of the reticular space.

Thus, we endorse Moreira’s (2005) thought about the making up of identity patterns by a relational otherness. This means rurality and urbanity are dialectical pair of words coexisting in simultaneous interaction and difference. As the author said,

In another sense, every existing social identity expresses itself and can only be revealed in its relationships. We can only speak of individuals in society or in society of individuals [...] Relations have no absolutely autonomous existence that makes them up and no hidden essence that is revealed in parts, as epistemologies inherited from positivism and essentialism lead to believe (MOREIRA, 2005, p. 18).

The association of thoughts expressed in such quotation with those of Santos (2002) shows that the (re)production of the geographic space — the materiality and immateriality of objects and actions system — both



subjects the maintenance of hegemonic structures and is subjected by them. Thus, the production of rural and urban social identities is articulated by asymmetric processes of power; that is, relations between country and city thought of as spatial interactions (CORRÊA, 1997). Besides, interactions between urban and rural sociability are guided by power relations based on articulations and overlaps, which come from inequalities and produce inequalities. In other words, the city as spatial expression and its urbanities (Rua 2007) are hegemonic as to the country and its ruralities, but they do not destroy subaltern processes of country origins.

As Rua (2007) says,

Rural urbanities would be all material and immaterial manifestations with an innovative character (not always of urban or metropolitan origin, although influenced by such origin) in rural areas, without, therefore, identifying such spaces as urban ones. Urbanities are made up of a huge range of manifestations, which include, in their material aspects, infrastructure improvements and media, new forms of leisure, second residence, tourism, industries, access to collective consumer goods, real estate speculation and land pricing, new labor relations, labor rights, rural retirement, etc. (2007, p. 272).

Rua (2002; 2007) links changes in the country in its relations with cities to movements of greater magnitude. According to the author, the movement of the capitalist mode of production establishes (and reproduces) processes of commodification *of* space and *in* space, always in an unequal and combined way (HARVEY 2004). The resulting diversity stems from a historical process of materialization and clash of productive forces in a given socio-spatial context. Therefore, conditions of investment and expanded reproduction of capital not only are determined by conflicts, mediations, co-optations and changeable acceptances throughout the historical process but also determine them. In practice, individuals perform various roles and different actions that enhance social and spatial relations complexity.

Social practices present in urbanities or ruralities are, in general, appropriate and turned into mechanisms of expanded reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. The apparent simplicity of the statement masks an enormous possibility of interactions and analyses of separate spatial and social morphologies only for understanding. After all, in reality, they are imbricated processes. This position reinforces the need and the difficulty regarding to think of parameters and indicators capable of systematizing the country and the city, especially their relations. Thus, we reiterate what Sobarzo (2006, p. 53) says: “the focus of the discussion of what is urban and rural shifts from form to content” and these contents’ spatial expressions appear in the country and in the city.

Although urbanities and ruralities have distinct social contents and spatial morphologies, they carry the expression of an urban, global logic as virtuality that is, as a result, normative and hegemonic. Therefore, to think of separating country and city according to statistical indicators and parameters is to break the relational and transscale basic logic of interactions between urbanities and ruralities as well as countries and cities.



As virtuality (the urban is hegemonic) and as social practice, urbanities become hegemonic by interacting with other practices in different scales. Thus, as Sobarzo (2006) puts it, there are dialectical advances and setbacks in interactions between country and city, (re)inventions and new articulations in social contents, as well as inclusions/marginalizations of areas, techniques and people.

Urbanization does not represent the construction and building of morphologies typical of cities. The urban is not synonymous with city; city is not an antonym of country. Urbanities and ruralities are practices and social contents in interaction, and the generalized urbanization not only integrates country and city, but also articulates them.

In observing this process, Monte-Mór (2006) suggests the autonomy of the urban and the rural (as of the city and the country) as to a complex list of cultural, socioeconomic and spatial relations between forms and processes derived from the city and from the country. The author, however, does not mention the dichotomous clearness and the direct association typical of past times (when the paradigm emerged).

Such dissociation may occur in two analytical dimensions. The first dimension points to the country and the city as elements within the spatial production chain, despite posing different intensities depending on this production model degree of “urbanization”. The rural and the urban go from the objectivity (of the country and the city) to the subjectivity related to the way of life and to demands and levels of technique in the spatial production. The urban turns out to be seen not only by the agglomeration itself, but also by the technique, social relations and flows generated by the spatial production (in which information flow enters as well). The degree of urbanization is now analyzed regarding the relationship of a locality with technique and capital main flows related to the spatial production model. Territories seen as rural ones, in varying intensities, modified according to the level of influence of the urban society, in which its mode of spatial reproduction alters not only the landscape, but also social relations already solidly established.

This dimension of analysis is influenced by Lefebvre’s (1991) thinking of society urbanization: increasingly, urban population overcomes rural population, while rural territories gradually enter the logic of urban, industrial production, along with the expansion of urban culture in society’s way of life (a mirroring of information flow expansion). The city and the country are now characterized as material elements subject to territorial reordering resulting from the urbanization process.

The idea of urbanization of territories and society serves as basis for several study currents in the country–city and rural–urban theme. It is worth, however, highlighting two groups supported by the country–city conception as material element subject to the urbanization process. The difference between these groups will start from the premise of rural world disappearance in this process or the premise of its permanence/reinvention.



In the first group, authors like Endlich (2013, p. 29) reinforce (and bring back) the association of the rural with precariousness, besides attributing the transformation in this space to the urban way of life expansion. In this logic, overcoming precariousness would occur as result from the urban spatial reproduction mode, while the rural would tend to disappear as urbanization advances (in the country and in the city).

With a similar perspective, studies on a certain gradient (continuum) between the rural and the urban based on the urbanization degree (material and intangible/cultural) of a locality³ point to a tendency to the disappearance of the rural world, as Rua said (2006, p. 90). This author criticizes the conception of the continuum (urbanization degrees in the territory) as part of an “urban-centered” principle: the urban mirrors the advance of the capitalist mode of production and that leads to the disappearance of the rural.

In the 1980s, Fredrich and Davidovich (1982) already studied territories’ urbanization. They seen it a phenomenon of an unequal expansion of a dominant production model in territories that generated varied scales of urbanization. This gradient view of urbanization between more “urbanized” and less “urbanized” territories underlies thoughts such as those of Silva (1997): industrialization in the country world and the urban world overflow in those territories seen as rural mirrors the urbanization of the rural — in the logic of the expansion of the urban and industrial society addressed by Lefebvre (1991). Based on this studies trend, the rural world is seen as an opaque space (Santos, 1996) tending to disappearance while technique, equipment, capital and information flows and all culture involved in urban society advance. Such advance would forever alter the physical environment and social relations in regard of what was understood as the rural.

Although some consider the disappearance of the rural as an urbanization trend, a second group of studies does not recognize it. Instead, it points to the resurgence of the rural within the new configurations of space. The rural can remain as a resistance form to the urbanization process or it can be integrated to this flow by becoming valuable as a commodity (which would make its maintenance indispensable to the production and territorial planning system). One should add that territorial differences in this urbanization process could create environments where the urban and the rural merge into hybrid (rural–urban) environments, which means other categories regarding the spatial analysis.

In his discussion of “urbanities in the rural”, Rua (2006, p. 94) rejects the tendency of disappearance of the rural world. Instead, the author understands the process of creating hybrid spaces through the interaction of the urban with the rural as a result in two scales of action. One scale is the broad one: urbanity is understood as a becoming [*devenir*], the urbanization of society. Another scale is the local-action one: particularities of this process in each territory are observed; cultural identities, social relations, actors and “commodification” of the rural space

³ This work draws on Carneiro’s (2008) consideration of locality as expression of the territoriality of a group next to a reference (albeit fluid) of spatial location.



take place in different intensities and generate the differentiation of these territories. Hence, the creation of hybrid spaces where the rural is preserved.

Similarly, Sposito (2013, p. 121) recognizes the existence of a transition area characterized by the sharing of political, social and economic practices related to urban and rural spaces. However, unlike the first group of studies — which understands the process as disappearance of the rural world —, the author thinks this constitution means the possibility of creating another space unit containing the urban and the rural.

In the context of spatial production, Carneiro (2008) deals with the aspect of the re-signification of rural space as historically constituted and presenting forms of social interaction and ways of life different from that one conceived in the urban-centered becoming (*devir*); specific differences would be in the space occupation and in the relationship with the natural environment. Carneiro (2008) deals, too, with the symbolism attributed to the rural in the making of an idealized rural myth: a space composed of elements that would be absent in the image of the urban (where the rural and the urban start in an idealization to be “found” or even produced in the physical environment). In his study of the rural space in Rio de Janeiro state, Marafon (2010) points out the existence of an idyllic rural consumed by urban society; it is observed by the growing demand of rural tourism, ecotourism and migratory flow to cities reordered in the imaginary of a rural environment as resulting from high quality of life.

Although this second group of thoughts recognizes the hegemonic character of the urbanization process in society and in territories, it does not count on with the end of the rural world (of what is conceived as rural), whether by its re-signification or its valuation as commodity. The group, however, foresees its modification and adaptation with the territorial restructuring derived from this process considering each territory particularities and the conflicting and unequal action characteristic of the urban-centered becoming (*devir*). The country and the city, as in the first group, remain as forms of spatial appropriation subject to the production model; they cease to be antagonistic spaces to become complementary in the production chain.

This perspective of analysis of urbanization impact on rural spaces raises thoughts on what such urbanization process is. When one thinks of it as a result of a predominant model of production and territorial ordering, then it is directly associated with the word urban due to the greater intensity and influence it exerts, a priori, on the urban universe. The matter to be discussed includes the association of the model with a necessarily urban bias (in the form usually associated in the scientific literature) and knowing if it works with its own logic and operates in the urban and the rural (in the city and in the country) with different scales and intensities.

Based on this thought, it is possible to establish a second perspective of analysis: the one that dissociates the rural–urban from the country–city without linking the spatial production model to the urban society. Country and city present themselves as morphological forms or structures with predominant functionalities associated with agglomeration or dispersion; they are objective and material elements. On the other hand, the rural and the



urban go beyond the object and material sphere; they rise to the sphere of cultural, symbolic and social relations (one may even speak of rural and urban territorialities).

This is Marafon's and Seabra's (2014) understanding as to developing the idea of conceptual separation between city–country and urban–rural. The city–country relation would express itself as interdependent spatial (morphological) structures, that is, it would reject the antagonism paradigm regarding these two structures as the urban–rural would be practices and social contents in interaction (this means, therefore, entering the virtual and cultural field). Establishing the fragmentation of country–city (especially due to the material, functional and morphological aspect) and rural–urban relations (rising to subjectivity spheres) in the context of a spatial production model and hegemonic territorial ordering (without disregarding the temporal character of hegemony) requires three fundamental clarifications. The first one is on the conception of country and city in this analytical dimension. The second one is on the rural and the urban subjective character. The third one is on the temporality in the process of territorial restructuring (no longer specifically linked to the urbanization idea) and on why the paradigm of direct association of words still may be observed spatially and academically.

THE COUNTRY AND THE CITY: A PRAGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

In this analysis perspective, the country and the city, no longer necessarily tied to the rural–urban conception, arise in the material field not only as specific structural forms but also as related to three aspects, as it follows.

1) *Agglomeration and dispersion*. In short, the city tends to have agglomeration (of people, buildings, constructions, equipment, road network, services, etc.) larger than that of the country (where occupation is more dispersed). This agglomeration/dispersion characteristic should not be mistaken with levels of spatial modification by human activity (scattered and intensely modified occupations may take place).

The association of the city and the country with trend morphologies — respectively, dispersion and agglomeration — has already been mentioned in other academic studies such as the following. Diry (2004, p. 9) relates elements like low density and deconcentration of buildings as criteria for characterizing the rural environment (when meaning country). Medeiros (2011, p. 59) relates the country as an area away from the city's centrality and low population density. Whitacker (2010, p. 191) attributes to the country a representation characterized by dispersion. Sposito (2013, p. 113) uses demographic concentration attributes and spatial unit (understood in the concentration of buildings) as a criterion to differentiate country from city. Finally, Geiger (1963, p. 9) describes the city — its formal aspect — as a form of expressive grouping of individuals and specific architectural physiognomy.



This perception of the city and the country by the morphological aspect leads to the understanding that these forms, in agreement with Beaujeu-Garnier (2010),⁴ would be different by the occupation and destination of the soil. As a strategy to highlight the shape of the city, it follows the image of the urban fabric⁵ developed by Rego and Meneguetti (2011):

What draws attention to the design (*desenho*) of a city in the first place is its fabric, the web of its elements. The urban fabric has to do with the road system, the pattern of soil allotment (*parcelamento do solo*), the agglomeration and insulation of the buildings as well as the free spaces. In other words, the fabric of the city includes buildings, streets, blocks and lots, parks, squares and monuments, in their most varied arrangements.

It should be said that not only people and buildings give the concentration character to the city, but also the means of production, capital, labor and collective consumer goods (CARLOS, 2013). Thus, when one looks beyond the concentration character, that is, at the allotment (*parcelamento*) and its pattern observed in land occupation (with direct consequences in the square meter value), then city and country begin to have a territorial order that differentiates them. City's structural characteristics take shape in blocks, verticalization and road patterns different from the occupation of the country.

As for the notion of scale in the understanding of the country and the city (the concentration of the city *versus* the vastness attributed to the country), given the character of agglomeration or dispersion, the scale used and experienced by these spaces' inhabitants should be differentiated. It should be considered: access to services and equipment — of greater concentration and proximity in cities; area for preservation — tends to be larger in the country than in the city; land value per square meter — tends to be higher in the city; amount of land required for space reproduction — tends to be larger in the country; among other comparable attributes. In this regard, it is possible as well to treat the differences between the country and the city depending on the scale attributed to these spaces.

2) *The functionality and organizational structure of the forms.* The technical and territorial division of labor — as conceived by Lefebvre (2016) — affects the differentiation between the country and the city. It makes these environments more conducive to certain activities in the spatial production logic (and logistics). The country is perceived both as the place of farming output primarily (labor relations and spatial production links to this sector) and as a reserve for expansion; the city is perceived as an environment where activities related to industry, commerce and services predominate (the city society is organized according to these sectors).

⁴ Beaujeu-Garnier (2010, p. 7) attributes to specific means of soil occupation the condition of spatial organization, of city characterizers. This study understands that such condition would take place in differentiation of what the country would be in regard of its occupation aspects.

⁵ Urban fabric in this study should be not mistaken with the urban fabric discussed by Lefebvre (1991), who takes it with both material aspects and subjective aspects.



Land use influences directly this functional differentiation of country and city through the quantity and dimensioning that given activities will require. Agricultural and environmental preservation activities tend — the rule is not absolute — to demand larger amounts of land than industry, trade, and service activities do. Again, one relates city and country to a question of scale: how much land the activity demands.

This functional association does not mean some production sectors belong exclusively to the country or to the city; it does not even mean that its organization agrees with the mandatory combination of industry, commerce and service.⁶ Given the complexity and diversity in spatial occupation and reproduction, each locality can present specific elements in the territorial planning due to the position and degree of interaction with the production system on a global or regional scale.⁷ Thus, it is fully possible the existence of industrial activities in the country (agro-industry) and of farming activities in the city (urban gardens, intensive crops, etc.) without these environments losing their country or city material characteristics.

It really deserves consideration the predominant functionality of these means, in turn the relationship of such function with the structuring of local society. Territorial planning influences directly the materialization of the country and the city (in their respective diverse forms), although the spatial production model will not change intensively forms inherited from previous production models. With this analysis — and the aspect of concentration and dispersion —, distinguishing the city from the country becomes possible.

3) *The forms go from opposition to complementarity.* The understanding of city and country as constituted by agglomeration/dispersion, functionality, and society and territory planning agrees with Marafon (2010) as to a country–city relationship sustained more in complementarity and dependence than in the old opposition established between the country and the city. With the technical and territorial labor division, a flow was established associating country and city in the same production chain and creating a networks environment connected by nodes (cities). These latter, according to Santos (2006), would have coordination functions in order to make the process feasible. Thus, city and country enter the same process of spatial production as opposed to the idea of different production models for these environments.

In the context of variability in country and city forms (in contrast to the almost binary old country–versus-city dichotomy), it is observed a spatial production system⁸ interacting with all territories in different intensities and resistances. The city and the country become varied amplitudes as to the degree of intensity

⁶ The city industrial aspect is discussed by Lefebvre (1991; 2016) as an aspect that was losing relevance in view of the “urban” and the “urban society” (which is taken in this work as the predominant model of spatial production and territorial planning).

⁷ Santos’s (1996) analysis is the starting point to understand local spatial production and its relationship with spatial production on another scale (such as the global one).

⁸ It should not be forgotten the temporal aspect of a dominant spatial reproduction model. The abovementioned system has temporal limitations as to the analysis of the present. It allows, at most, the work with future scenarios.



with which such system operates on such spaces and as to resistance that these spaces may pose (generating the diversity in city and country forms).

Changes may even manifest themselves more intensely in some country localities than in city ones; an example would be farming production areas modified by agribusiness. Besides, changes may appear with distinct intensities in the same region. Without the good-and-bad and better-and-worse judgments, Santos' (2006) idea of luminous spaces and opaque spaces is useful to understand such spatial differentiations due to the intensity of action (and position/function in the regional or global network) of the spatial production system. Thus, the city and the country become material forms endowed with specific morphologies and functionalities that, in different amplitudes (in the city and the country), are reordered according to a predominant model of spatial production

THE RURAL AND THE URBAN

If in this second level of analysis it is proposed that the city–country interface evokes material and functional elements detached from the urban–rural one (endowed with more subjectivity), so one may ask where, in the spatial production current context, the urban and the rural will fit together. They will no longer regard only material aspects manifested in space. They reach a subjective sphere, where they start to encompass aspects of cultural, identity, symbolic, historical and social practices manifested in each territory, which creates a diversity of hybrid territories where urbanities and ruralities are observable at different levels.

Lefebvre (2002) draws attention to the urban (or the urban society) beyond the form observed in the morphology of the city that would not comprehend all social relations (of production and exchange) present in the urban phenomenon. According to him, urban society has a symbolic character and a remarkable social practice that go beyond city boundaries (which means, the image of city manifested virtually). In his own words, “We can assume the existence of a *virtual object*, urban society; that is, a *possible object*, whose growth and development can be analyzed in relation to a process and a praxis (a practical action)” (LEFEBVRE, 2003, p. 3).⁹

Lefebvre (2002) starts from the universality and totality of urban society to indicate a complete urbanization (or a becoming [*devenir*] of urbanization) to understand that the urban — historically born of industrial society (this latter being born of an agrarian society in turn) — mirrors a process/model of spatial production. Such process/model reaches the territories, where it influences their ordering and restructures their social relations.

⁹ T.N.: the quoted English version came from *The Urban Revolution*, a translation by Neil Smith published by University Minnesota Press, 2003.



This understanding influenced both currents regarding the trend of the rural disappearance and currents indicating the rural reinvention in the urban society hegemonic becoming (*devir*). It is important, however, to consider that Lefebvre's "urban" consists of the spatial production model predominating currently (temporal aspect) and historically built over other production models that were gradually surpassed (agrarian model and industrial model later). This model — which does not manifest itself uniformly in territories (occurring at different times and intensities) — is responsible for a spatial complexity that makes it difficult to identify what is urban and what is rural; unlike the case of the city and the country (that are visible in the image of the two morphologies).

The urban and the rural will constitute ideas historically built upon social practices and subjectivities (symbols, identities, cultures). They can present conceptual distinctions according to each society. They are submitted to the influence of spatial production models (territorial restructuring). They, however, can maintain singularities inherited from past moments (practices and ancient symbols). Thus, there are territories comprising urbanities and ruralities, which appear as such in a given moment (time) and society (historical context). These measures of the rural and the urban do not necessarily show an urbanization gradient (continuum); they appear more adequately when correlated with the notion of hybrid spaces (RUA, 2006) but without a hierarchical relationship between the urban and the rural.

In dealing with rural space as a social representation, Woods (2005) approached the idealization of such space through symbols attributed to it (questions on how each one defines the rural), so that the rural world will emerge as a social construction, a definition applicable to the urban universe too. To the author, the understanding of social construction goes through the path where each person identifies a place, an object or an idea by attributing social, cultural, aesthetic and ideological characteristics to it. Although it comes from a singular thought, a social construction takes place only when a group of people imagines it as such. Therefore, it is simultaneously an individual and collective (a set of thoughts) dimension. Diry (2004) reinforces this image of historically constructed spaces by linking the conception of what is rural based on the landscape (not only on morphology, but also on symbols and meanings landscapes represent), on the cultural heritage, and on the social actors involved in their environment reproduction.

Thus, the rural and the urban appear as abstractions sustained by the collective imaginary, derived from relationships, practices, symbols, and territorial identities. They constitute social constructions elaborated by the perception of individuals and that, according to Guerra (1993), are based on daily life (space lived by each subject) and by the social imaginary (historical conjunctures and desirable representations). One may conclude, agreeing with Carneiro (2008), that the rural and the urban are understood as social practices and cultural models that interpenetrate, and can be analyzed by the perception of rurality (such as urbanity) as a historically forged cultural phenomenon (CARNEIRO, 2008, p. 23). This conception breaks through the notion of the rural as linked to the technological backwardness and the absence of infrastructure; it characterizes itself as an opaque space,



underutilized by urban society. Once the rural and the urban are social representations in such conception, this latter overcomes these categories' approach.¹⁰

Understanding the rural and the urban by considering social representations subjectivity (culture, historicity, social practices, identities, symbolism) means assimilating three particularities. The first particularity is the diversified composition of territories filled with urbanities and ruralities in different levels and interactions arising from the historical (and geographical) context where they take place. The second particularity occurs as a function of the elevation of the rural–urban relation to the subjective (virtual) sphere, making possible to disaggregate materiality concepts in a given moment. To say it differently, words are dynamic/mutable; their meanings can be redefined in another context (another spatial production model). The third particularity is the realization that it has nothing to do with the urban advancing over the rural one. It has to do with the advancement of a spatial production model over the urban and the rural that restructures the territory (thus, relations in it) and re-signifies the urban and the rural in the new historical context.

This understanding makes possible to expand the analysis of the urban and the rural as categories that cease to be antagonistic in order to compose hybrid spaces of urbanities and ruralities. In other words, this understanding allows observing cities and countries as a mix of rural and urban aspects but without meaning greater or lesser intensity of influence of the hegemonic model of the current spatial production.

THE (RE)UNION OF THE TERMS AND THE PARADIGM MANIFESTATION

Approaching the rural and the urban (the city and the country) always requires considering the temporal character and the relationship of such themes with spatial production models. As to the models, the theme (the rural and the urban relations) may have had close association with the current idea of country and city in times and spatial configurations prior to the hegemonic model of territorial planning. It was so in the approach of the industrial city as well as in the agrarian field¹¹ prevailing in the nineteenth century and in the first half of the past century.

Regarding the temporal character, the idea of unequal development is reinforced in order to understand that each territory has its “time” in the transition from one spatial production model to another. Such transition does not always occur uniformly or without conflicts. Thus, there are advances and setbacks, prioritized spaces

¹⁰ Although environment, and its degree of alteration, may be part of the representation of the rural–urban relations — despite being only imagined or desired —, such partaking cannot be evoked exclusively to differentiate these categories

¹¹ As an example of model, Lefebvre (1991; 2002) points to the era/moment of the industrialization phenomenon (the industrial city and the agrarian country) as earlier of what the author calls urban phenomenon or urbanization. As already stated, based on this interpretation one may say this new model of territorial planning does not relate to the urban (or the rural). It relates to a model of spatial production that gradually surpasses the old model (of the industrial era).



and neglected spaces, different spectrums of intensity (transformation) and of conflicts due to the use/occupation of the territory in the transition between one model and another (which may even coexist at certain times).

That is why it is important to work with the idea of time in the study of the urban–rural and the city–country in the logic of the spatial production and territorial planning. The meanings of such pairs of words will always be associated with the moment (time) when they are studied and with forces (territorializations) derived from spatial production models. Meanings will consider both the intensity with which such forces act and modify each territory and the result (synthesis) of these forces' conflict with ancient spatial configurations.

Understanding the relationship of those words meanings with time and spatial production is useful to think of why the urban is still associated with the city and the rural to the country; which is why the paradigm resurfaces.

The first reason regards the unequal development and different “times” of territories. Although the hegemonic model of territorial planning may have almost completely surpassed the previous models in given areas, others may have been lightly affected by this model and manifest spatial configuration similar to past models of spatial production: in their logic of spatial planning, they experiment a distinct moment of areas most affected by the hegemonic model. The differentiation of each territory “times” results from the intensity with which the spatial production predominant model transforms them.¹² Thus, there may be territories where organization is predominantly in accordance with previous models of spatial structuring, which results in predominantly agricultural countries (with the production logic prior to “modernization”), countries marked by rural symbols and in agglomerations corresponding to a predominantly industrial/commercial centrality marked by urban symbols.

In addition, nothing prevents the connection of the rural with the country and of the urban with the city, even in the current logic of spatial production and spatial planning. The idea is that rural and urban both move to the immateriality and symbolism sphere and detach from the materiality of the country and the city. This does not mean that such terms may not (re)fit. The difference, when observing this fitting, occurs in the conception of rural and urban as words. Previously, they related directly to material aspects (city and country), today they are associated with subjectivities derived from social relations, symbolism, historicity and identities present in the territories. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the urban–city and the rural–country as word combinations able of generating a synthesis: the spatiality (materiality) of bourgeois sociability.

Even with dissociations regarding rural–urban and country–city pairs, the academic debate (as the exercise of science itself) may still be dealing with traces of the previous paradigm (direct association between those pairs of words) based on the observation of territories where country–rural and city–urban associations coincide. In

¹² It should be stressed these transformations are not exclusively material ones. They may appear as symbolic or immaterial changes as well.



these cases, it should be considered that the interpretation proposed in this study does not preclude these configurations, but it takes into account the idea that such configurations are not exclusive: the rural can occur in cities, the urban can happen in countries. Such occurrences create a diversity of compositions of urbanities and ruralities in each territory.

FINAL REMARKS

This study sought to put into evidence the conceptual separation between rural–urban and country–city relations, which breaks through the paradigm that associates them (the country links to the rural, the city links to the urban). The overcoming of the paradigm occurs in the perception that the urban and the rural cease to be linked to the morphological or functional aspect (material sphere) and make up subjective elements that transmit their representation such as social imaginary, historical construction, relationships between actors living in such environments, symbols, etc. Insofar as the country and the city turn out to be established as material structures based on land use and occupation, the rural and the urban move to the immaterial (virtual) sphere: they turn out to be part of dynamic and changeable social constructions and practices that can occur in the country and in the city. This is why there are localities with rural and urban features — an urbanized country, a rural town. Of course, these aspects of urbanities and ruralities have little to do with the technological level itself; they regard more the social constructions and practices sustaining an urban character or a rural one (perhaps both).

Therefore, there is another breakthrough: in the dimension of analysis sustaining the urbanization of society or the predominance of the urban over the rural. In reality, what predominates is a model of spatial production¹³ and territorial planning over other models. This model works so that to transform the rural and the urban (impacting on the virtual sphere and transforming the perception of these concepts) and the city and the country (changing the territorial order in the material sphere). Spatial differentiations in this context are generated by the intensity with which this model operates in territories and by the synthesis generated in its confrontation with previous spatial configurations.

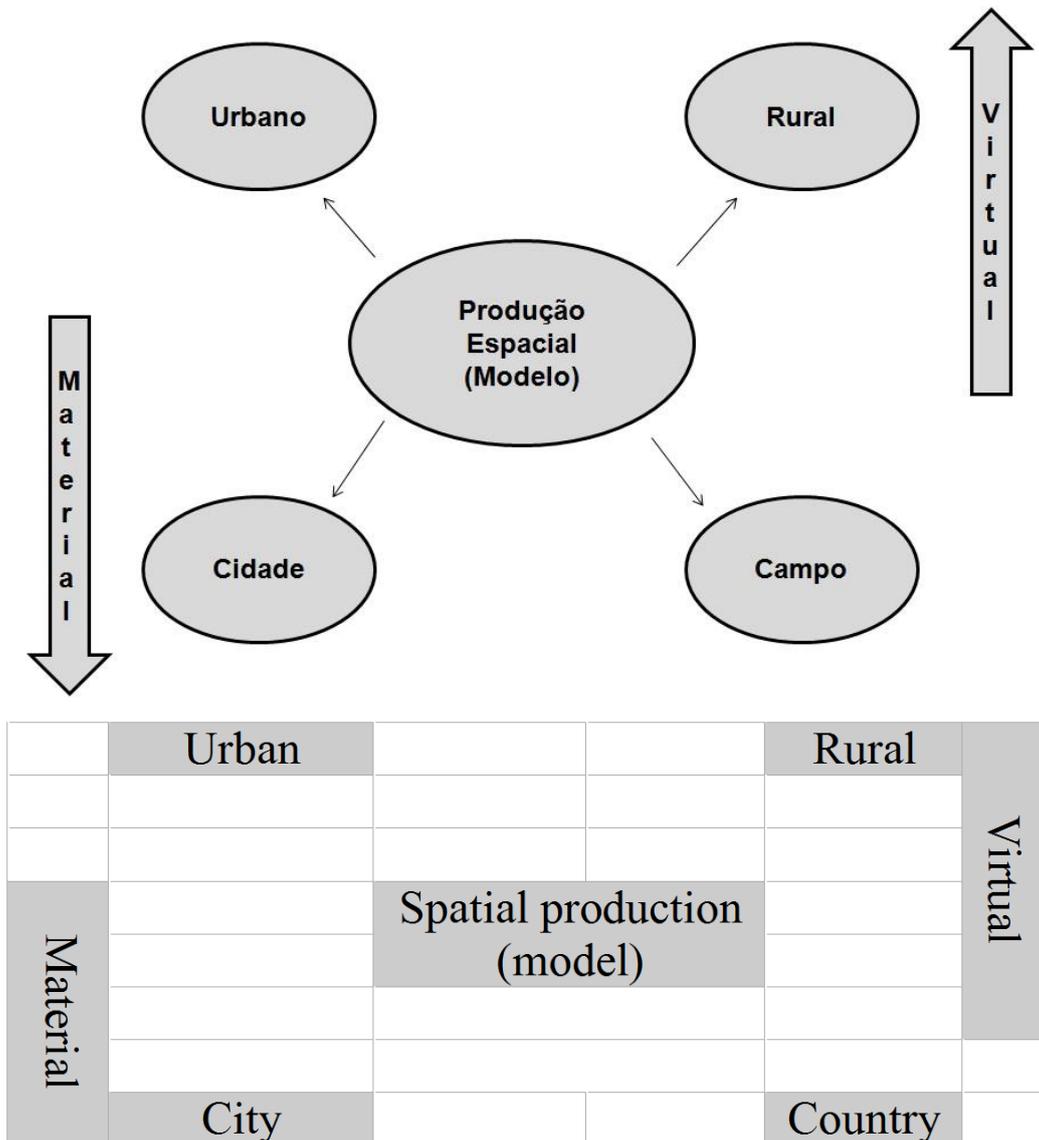
When addressing the transition between hegemonic spatial production models, Lefebvre (1991; 2002) chose to use *urban phenomenon* term as identification of the current model. This fact influenced the association of such model with the idea of the urban in the academy. One should remember, however, that the idea of urban predates the *urban phenomenon*, and what draws attention in the work of Lefebvre (1991; 2002) is the transition from one spatial production model to another one, regardless of the name given to the new model.¹⁴ This way,

¹³ When it comes to the predominance of a spatial production model, one considers it has a social power (capacity to direct/structure the territorial order) that is greater than that of other models. Saquet (2015) applied this “Foucaultian” understanding of power in approaching the territory.

¹⁴ Santos (1996), for example, chooses to attribute the new model to globalization.

there is no need to talk of urbanization when it comes to the expansion of this predominant model, for it operates (transforms) in the urban and in the rural (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Representation of country–city and rural–urban conceptual pairs in the material and virtual spheres influenced by a spatial production model



It is necessary to consider the temporal scale of the analysis addressing urban–rural and city–country relations at the beginning of the twentieth-first century. As already said, over the years, a transition of spatial production models (operating at different times and with different intensities in space) has been taking place and interfering with the conceptual meanings of words such as city, country, rural, and urban. Whatever meanings such words may have had in the past, currently these meanings are changing; and they may change once more when another model surpasses the current one. Given this analysis’ temporal limitation, it is not



up to this study to name the current model of spatial production; it suffices to identify it as the predominant model

True, it is difficult to undo an idea that is widespread and that was “consolidated” decades ago; but the aim of this work is not to overcome completely one paradigm by the creation of another. Working with elements such as space, time and scale leads scientists to accept that, given society’ dynamics, discussions and conceptual reviews will be necessary. Time alters space constantly and with different levels or intensities of transformation. Models of spatial production and spatial planning are surpassed, altered and reinvented, so as it must be concepts applied in the understanding of such models.

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