

COUNTRY AND CITY: TOURISM AS A SOCIO-SPATIAL EXPRESSION OF A HYBRID RELATIONSHIP IN STATES OF PARAÍBA AND RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

CAMPO E CIDADE: O TURISMO COMO EXPRESSÃO SOCIOESPACIAL DESSA RELAÇÃO HÍBRIDA NA PARAÍBA E NO RIO DE JANEIRO

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ABSTRACT

The idea of country and city as antagonistic spaces that gradually grow distant from each other and that are doomed to be separated has lost validity regarding the spatial dynamics itself. This latter's essence is in the reconstruction of histories and spaces through individual and collective actions, which shape objects and ascribe them with new roles in a continuous process of renewal. Aiming to analyze the hybrid relationship between city and country spaces in Paraíba and Rio de Janeiro — states of Brazilian northeast and southeast, respectively —, this study has considered tourist activities related to the production and reproduction of these spaces. It focuses mainly on the country, where traditional rural functions such as producing food for the city and providing workforce and raw material, share space with non-farming activities such as industry production and tourism services due to the spread of leisure areas in the rural space. This growth of non-farming activities results from technological developments represented by improvements and expansion of communication devices (telephony) and structures (roads and transportation). It contributes to the emergence of relations between the city and the country. Among socio-spatial and cultural changes in the country, tourism appears as a national way of valuing the rural space and its characteristics that reproduce a country and country life subjected to forces of nature, although technical elements typical of contemporary urban life such as infrastructure and communication had been already absorbed by the countryside. This article presents a geographical and critical treatment of the relationship between the country and the city relatively to tourism based on scientific works (academic articles, dissertations, and theses). Its sources include documents of agencies responsible for tourist activities in Paraíba and Rio de Janeiro as well as observations in loco. It analyzes such hybrid relationship to try to unravel how it is inscribed in each state territory and how touristic activity helps developing and maintaining rural activities in Paraíba and Rio de Janeiro country.

Palavras-chave: Relationship between country and city; Paraíba state; Rio de Janeiro state.

RESUMO

As visões do campo e da cidade como espaços antagônicos, que se distanciam progressivamente e estão fadados a separação, há algum tempo perdem validade quando se leva em consideração a própria dinâmica espacial, cuja essência está na reconstrução de histórias e espaços, a partir das ações individuais e coletivas, moldando os objetos, atribuindo-lhes novas funções, em um processo contínuo de renovação. Nesse sentido, o presente trabalho pretende analisar a relação híbrida existente entre os espaços do campo e da cidade nos estados da Paraíba e do Rio de Janeiro - Brasil, levando em consideração as atividades turísticas que contribuem para a produção e reprodução desses espaços, principalmente no campo, onde as funções tradicionais de produtor de alimentos para abastecimento da cidade, bem como fornecedor de mão-de-obra e matérias-primas, têm dividido espaço com atividades não-agrícolas, a exemplo das atividades industriais e de serviços, como o turismo, devido à proliferação de áreas de lazer no meio rural. Este crescimento das atividades não-agrícolas é decorrente do desenvolvimento tecnológico representado pela melhoria e expansão das vias de comunicação, como telefonia, estradas e meios de transporte, e contribuem para o surgimento das relações campo-cidade. Nesse bojo de transformações socioespaciais e culturais no campo, o turismo aparece, em âmbito nacional, como valorização do espaço rural e seus elementos característicos que reproduzem um campo e uma vida rural comandados pelas forças da natureza, embora este campo tenha absorvido os principais elementos técnicos que caracterizam a vida urbana contemporânea, a exemplo das infraestruturas e meios de comunicação. Nesse contexto, sob uma leitura crítica geográfica, embasada em trabalhos científicos como artigos, dissertações, teses, sobre a relação campo-cidade atrelada com o turismo, além de consulta aos documentos oficiais dos órgãos responsáveis pelas políticas voltadas para as atividades turísticas nos estados da Paraíba e do Rio de Janeiro, localizados respectivamente nas regiões Nordeste e Sudeste, bem como a observação in loco, analisamos estas relações híbridas, buscando desvendar como se inscrevem territorialmente, em cada estado, essas relações e como a atividade turística contribui para o desenvolvimento e manutenção das atividades rurais no campo paraibano e fluminense.

Keywords: Relação Campo-cidade, Paraíba, Rio de Janeiro.

INTRODUÇÃO

By means of an accelerated expansion of the trading capitalism through past great navigations, the space of the world turned out to be increasingly discovered and exploited in accordance with the intention of those who conquered it.

With the mastering of agricultural production techniques, the capitalist town could definitely overcome the feudal town in such a way that it instilled a certain feeling of freedom in their inhabitants that they did not have living in the country. The use of the land had different values for people from rural areas and for people from towns; in turn, their daily habits had bonds to the rural way of life and the urban way of life. Despite this distinction, their behavior and economic activities they developed in these spaces were antagonistic and complementary at the same time: while the urban population needed food produced in the country, the rural population relied on some services and techniques developed in urban areas.

In this regard, the analysis of current transformations in Brazilian country becomes mandatory. Besides being the place where traditional functions are still performed — both providing workforce and raw material for the city and consuming products from urban areas —, the rural space is becoming increasingly the place of non-farming activities — for instance, industrial manufacture and services related to tourism activities that value areas with natural aspects preserved. One should highlight the continuous process of migration from urban areas to the country. These migrants are people who seek not only to enter the labor market but also for a life with better quality. This way, the country is becoming the place of non-farming activities as well, requiring workers such as farm caretakers, day laborers, gardeners etc. In addition, the rural space is becoming strongly marked by the technique and capital content of agroindustries and agribusiness, which correspond to the place of agricultural production, resulting from the green revolution, agrarian modernization and agriculture industrialization. In other words, the rural space of the household output is characterized by non-farming activities that value natural and historical heritage.

Improvements in the production chain caused the mechanization of the country output. They include, for example, the introduction of new technical elements (farm machinery and inputs) and the use of technical knowledge. As Pink and Ferreira (2006, p. 188) says, due to those improvements, the relationship between rural space and urban space has become more intense as for economic activities and social relations.

New relationships are configured between country and city. They show new qualities and leave strong marks on the landscape. In addition to farming and industry output, there are new activities that should be identified to characterize the country and its relations to the city. The huge diversity of activities results from the work of small farmers who help food production significantly and outline creatively their strategies to survive. Moreover, there are many social characters as big landowners, wageworkers, small farmers, partners, farming workers, sem-terra (landless people and their fight for the right of owning a piece of land). With their work, they materialize a wide range of objects, elements and situations in rural spaces that make the country a very complex place.

It is important to remember that these changes altered the organization of the space itself as a whole and involved non-rural interests. Rural marks remain in large farmhouses, crops, and in a few objects, whose function now goes beyond the farming level. As Woods (2007, p. 4961) says,

A rural realm constituted by multiple, shifting, tangled and dynamics networks, connecting rural to rural and rural to urban, but with greater intensities of globalization processes and of global interconnections in some rural localities than in others, and thus with a differential distribution of power, opportunity and wealth across rural space.

Given this level of diversity in the rural space, one notices a concern with nature conservation, with the intensification of other economic activities, and with other social interests. Now, who produces food may find new varieties that make the rural space more dynamic as well as may take advantage of new energy sources and amenities stemming from nearby urban areas.

In this case, there is a differentiated country: a country ready for city inhabitants to consume it. Industry and capitalist logic are already in it. Besides, the adaptation of rural habits to meet urban population needs increases more and more. That is why understanding these two spaces exceeds the idea of seeing them as antagonistic. As Rua (2006) proposed, there are urbanities in the rural.

In search for reproduction and survival, household output has presented certain characteristics, an example of which being the part-time job derived from the decrease in working hours due to incorporation of production technologies. This means family members are free to perform other farming and non-farming activities to complement household income.

Because of the spread of recreational areas in the rural space, tourism deserves some highlight among non-farming activities present in the country. These "new" touristic activities have demanded an increasing number of people to support tourism expansion in the rural space. For families' members free of their routine activities at the farm, tourist activities made possible to occupy job vacancies generated by the expansion of rural tourism and industrial activities.

In this scenario, rural tourism activities become another source of income for many households, and this helps maintaining and reproducing farming activities. Nevertheless, there is an emphasis on the preservation and protection of nature; and the pursuit of authenticity of local landscape elements, the conservation and protection of historical and cultural heritage, and the recovery of memory and identity turn out to be highly esteemed actions. Thus, there is a commodification of landscapes, with consequences for the expansion of tourism and leisure activities. This reality is noticeable in all Brazilian states, and this study considers two of them. It seeks to analyze the relationship between the country and the city in Paraíba and Rio de Janeiro states to identify tourism as an important element of change in rural areas.

In this regard, those who deepen the research considering the rural space bias — as we do — should think of Brazilian country as a hybrid area where are multiple functions, agro-industrial plants, family output, non-farming activities, and farmers and non-farmers who create connections and spatial interactions as individuals who share complex networks and put their mark on the rural space. Boundaries between the urban and the rural are more and more diffuse and complementary. The great challenge is to study them so that to stimulate the debate on current socio-spatial transformations in Brazilian country.

The relationship between country and city in Paraíba state: rural tourism as a way of making space more dynamic

According to IBGE, Brazilian institute for statistics, the population of Paraíba reached 3,766.528 inhabitants in 2010, and 2,838,678 of them live in urban areas. In other words, this northeastern state has followed the tendency to urbanization in Brazil as a whole. The process of urbanization in Paraíba has brought with it an increase of population in richest areas of the state. This is the case for João Pessoa city — the state capital — and Campina Grande — the second largest city (Carvalho; Silva, 2014).

As to the farming activity, its rates in Paraíba's gross domestic product have been showing variations due to a long period of drought, which affects other northeastern states as well. Besides, according to IDEME (2016), despite considerable recession in 2012 in the state, activities that improved for the following year were agriculture (19.9 per cent) and livestock (9 per cent). Forestry production, fishing and aquaculture play no significant role in Paraíba's gross domestic product. According to IBGE (2010), industry was the sector that evolved more in the state economy in recent years.

In service sectors, tourism appears as the dynamic element in Paraíba space. In fact, tourism shows considerable growth throughout the world; and in Brazil, an expansion of touristic activity became noticeable over recent decades. Now, tourism is a matter of specific public policies in all levels of Brazilian government. A ministry created in 2002 to deal with tourism suggests it (Barbosa; Kiyotani; Paes, 2014).

Rural tourism comes as a development alternative for several Brazilian municipalities and it is no different in the state of Paraíba, where coastal tourism already presents a certain degree of consolidation. This touristic modality privileges activities that mean being physically close to nature and the country way of life. According to Junior and Frascaroli (n. d.), depending on how rural tourism is planned, it may bring some advances to local communities; for example, improvement of living standards of populations concerned with it, socioeconomic benefits, and social development resulting from job generation and economic activities diversification.

In Paraíba hinterland, some towns take measures to welcome tourists. For example, they adopt segmentations that emphasize local culture and eco-tourism or rural tourism, which opens possibilities for small, family or community businesses.

Aiming to enhance the space dynamism and stimulate an aware use of spaces, the Ministry of Tourism resized the map of tourism in Paraíba, so that policies for this sector could have a better direction. The state reduced the number of municipalities of its eight tourism regions from 137 to 45. Now the map encompasses three towns in Agreste region, five in Costa das Piscinas, three in Rota Aventuras nas Serras, six in Trilhas dos Potiguaras, three in Cariri, eight in Vale dos Dinossauros, four in Vale dos Sertões, and thirteen towns in Brejo region (figure 1).

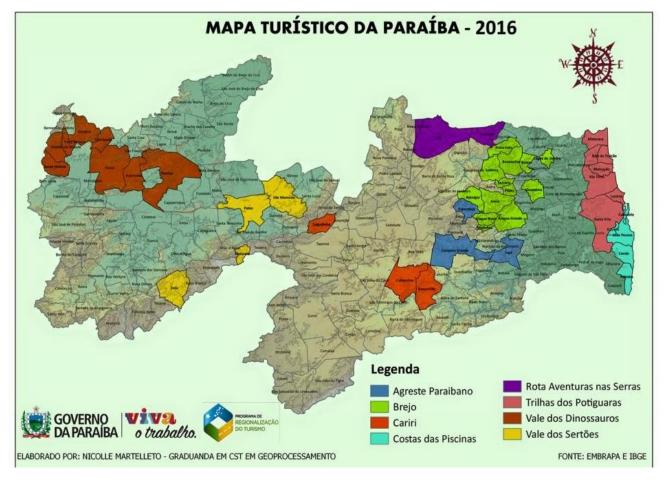


Figure 1. Tourism map of the state of Paraíba, Brazil, 2016. Source: available at: http://www.paraiba.com.br>.

As one may see in the map, Paraíba hinterland is now part of the state touristic circuit. This inclusion creates a stronger relationship between the country and the city, for many touristic elements of those municipalities relate to rural aspects above all. In Brejo microregion, for example, cultural tourism stands out. Events as Rota Cultural Caminhos do Frio, which takes place between June and August in six municipalities (Areia, Bananeiras, Serraria, Alagoa Nova, Alagoa Grande and Pilões), emphasize arts, gastronomy and history, since this is a region marked by the presence of sugar mills.

In Campina Grande, for example, the celebration of *festas juninas* (June festivals) relates to the devotion to St. Anthony, St. John, and St. Peter in Brazilian northeast country. This way, in June, a change in the landscape leaves Campina Grande downtown and many other areas of this municipality as Galante and São José da Mata with the appearance of large rural areas of northeast hinterland.

These festivals are an urban event, that is to say, aimed at townspeople; but they rely on rural references as a way of drawing the audience attention and attending.

Besides tourism events that seek to attract a diverse audience to praise a typical rural behavior, Paraíba state has important archaeological, paleontological, and historical sites that are relatively well preserved and easily accessible. They include Itacoatiaras, in the town of Ingá, and Vale dos Dinossauros, in Sousa (Silva; Silva, 2009).

Although the town of Cabaceiras, in Cariri region, presents the lowest rates of rainfall in Brazil, it has developed policies to encourage cultural and rural tourism. It focuses on activities of goat raising and visiting to a rock formation known as Lajedo de Pai Mateus (father Matthew's rock). It is a rocky elevation of almost 1.5 square kilometer. About one hundred large rounded stones stand out over caatinga scarce vegetation. Some of them contain inscriptions attributed to native population who lived in the region 12,000 years ago.

Tourism activities developed in Cabaceiras — goat raising and rock formation visiting — have made possible to diversify activities of rural population. People engage in primary activities and in services related to tourism. Vacancy for hotel cleaners, receptionists, and drivers, besides activities related to artisanal handicraft, contribute significantly to improve quality of life in this municipality. That is why one may say rural tourism is a new alternative to make farming activities go on in Cabaceiras, which has shown a considerable growth in the human development index. It went from "very low" to "medium" according to the atlas of human development in Brazil, 2013 issue. This change relates to what Júnior and Frascaroli said, as mentioned earlier.

These remarks point out that tourism has been contributing to make relations between the country and the city more diverse within Paraíba state. Despite attracting an originally urban population, rural tourism allows people from the city getting involved with country way of life and culture. Of course, this touristic segment presents peculiarities depending on the region; but it represents a capitalist logic that tends to be similar in all Brazilian states. This is the case for Rio de Janeiro, another state analyzed in this work.

Relations between country and city and rural tourism: Rio de Janeiro state space as an interface of the process

Rio de Janeiro state has the second largest industrial complex of Brazil, produces about 71 per cent of national oil production, and is the largest Brazilian producer of natural gas. Its fishing, olericulture, horticulture and dairy production are economically relevant too. Natural landscape is diverse, though degraded due to certain socioeconomic activities experienced. Rio de Janeiro is the most urbanized state in the country, with 95 per cent of its population living in urban areas. As Rua (2007) says, urbanizing axes where a denser urbanization occurs mark Rio de Janeiro territory; and a redistribution of population and production activities is noticeable (Limonad, 1996).

There are many problems related to the state's rural space. The concentration of population, income, savings and development conditions in the metropolitan region has caused a strong imbalance, since part of hinterland population faced political and social exclusion (Moreira, 2001). According to IBGE's census results, 10,871,960 people were living within the metropolitan area in 2000, which means 75.6 per cent of the state population. With its twenty municipalities, the metropolitan region stands firmly as the region that polarizes resources (Ribeiro, 2002).

Rua (2002, p. 47–8) notes that in Rio de Janeiro state "it prevails the projection of the metropolis carioca, which intensifies the process of urbanization"; and the urbanization characterizes the state territory so intensely "in terms of politics, culture, behavior, and economy, that the meaning of this urban area becomes overwhelming".

Rio de Janeiro hinterland has been standing out not only in terms of (small) population growth but also in the supply of fruits, vegetables, poultry, milk and products aimed at the market of organic food, herbs, goat's milk, trout etc. Besides, the region serves as recreational area for rural tourism. The proliferation of "farm-hotels", ¹ pousadas, spas, and second domicile real state proves it.

Most family farmers face a crisis due to income concentration and to the lack of effective agricultural policies. Large properties have always occupied a considerable part of the state of Rio de Janeiro. They represent 11.5 per cent of establishments (occupation with production) and occupy an area of 67.7 per cent of them, besides having a relevant role in agricultural exports.

Once exports' cycle of coffee (1900–30) and sugar (1970–80) ended, a certain lack of dynamism in farming activities marked most of properties that explored these cultivations commercially. There was a decapitalization resulting from the decline of large commercial crops. In this scenario, the level of agricultural exploration in large areas of the state was inferior to the productive potential of the soil. An example of this condition is in Vale do Paraíba region, where it prevails the raising of cattle characterized by very low productivity indexes.

On the other hand, one notices that small farmers — which are quite numerous — have few opportunities to invest in their land, since the level of investment return they work with does not enable them to capitalize their units of production. A good example of this situation comes from small milk producers who sell their output to cooperatives in the northwest, middle valley and central south regions of Rio de Janeiro state. Although they own the land legally, the way they enter the regional production implies not only a reduced autonomy in the conduct of their productive process but also limited possibilities of investing in their farms. Another example comes from the region of hills, where fruit and vegetable growers predominate in small properties. Farmers adopt pluriactivity as an alternative income source. Besides working with farming duties in their property, many engaged in non-farming jobs (house caretaker, drivers, housemaids, road tax officer etc.) in country summer houses, hotels, and as civil servant of nearby towns' city hall.

¹ It is the main house of an old farm turned into a hotel to lodge tourists interested in the country way of life.

The map of touristic areas in Rio de Janeiro state (figure 2) allows seeing that changes in rural space — for example, rural tourism and spread of non-farming jobs — relate to an intense urbanization process. They may be expressed as a route going from metropolitan region of Rio de Janeiro towards Angra dos Reis, Paraty, and Bahia de Ilha Grande region. In this latter, also known as Costa Verde, tourism stands out, especially in its beach, historical, and ecologic modalities. Not by chance, touristic activities have led to immense transformations in the region, where are large reserves of Atlantic forest, numerous islands (as Ilha Grande), and historical towns as Paraty. Great part of its territory is under environmental protection that inhibits farming activities.

The intense occupation by large luxury hotels and *condomínios fechados*² causes property speculation and drives traditional families out of their land. For these inhabitants, there are three options left: i) to look for a job in the urban labor market; ii) to devote themselves to plant extractivism and growing of bananas and palm three for extraction of palm heart under guidance of government agencies such as EMATER and IBAMA; iii) to perform non-farming activities as working in hotels and condos.

Another route where tourism plays an important role in regional growth and development goes from metropolitan region of Rio de Janeiro towards Cabo Frio, Macaé, Búzios and Costa do Sol (coastal lowlands) regions. One notes that mass tourism increases towards northern coast, causing an intense urbanization and proliferation of second domiciles. As a result, there were ceasing of farming activity and fractioning of land aiming at the selling of lots and the building of condomínios. As Rua (2002 p. 48) says, an "overwhelming property speculation with profound socio-spatial segregation marks" stems from the presence of Petrobras in Macaé.

² T. N. *Condomínios fechados* may be understood as "detached condominiums", meaning a housing area divided into lots to which access it controlled. Yards, building exteriors, and streets are owned and maintained by a community association.



Figure 2. Touristic areas in Rio do Janeiro state. Source: Cartographic database, IBGE — NEGEF (Ed.), 2009.

Another route of urbanization is located on the "hill top" region — as Rua (2002) named it. Towns such as Nova Friburgo, Petrópolis and Teresópolis are major examples of it. The cultivation of fruits and flowers is common there. The output supplies Rio de Janeiro metropolitan area. A traditional and relevant industrial segment stands out as well, especially of underwear. There are, too, the presence of numerous country summer homes, second domicile real estate, "farm-hotels", pousadas, and spas that link their services and facilities to the region natural aspects. As a touristic area, this means an alternative to beach tourism in Costa Verde and Costa do Sol. In addition, there is an intense household output, centered in small farms and relying only on family members' workforce to deal with crops where rates of machinery support are low.

Most of the times, these small farmers have to subject themselves to the will of middlemen who control the commercialization of the output, including lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, and tomato, among others. As the yield of their farming activities presents low rates, to complement household income they search for work in non-farming activities in the country, which include not only positions as gardener, farm caretakers, and housemaids but also job vacancy in companies located in nearby towns. The growing of hydroponic and organic vegetables is strong in the region too. The output is restricted to consumers from south Rio de Janeiro city. Activities of contemporary rural tourism are strongly present in areas of hills, in pace with the household output.

Rio de Janeiro's regions of Paraíba middle-valley and middle-south produce milk and contribute to the output of fruit, vegetable, and poultry aiming to supply the metropolitan region. However, coffee-related activities are what stands out in the landscape. They are apparent in large farmhouses. Not by chance, local governments organized Vale do Café festival; but it relates little to family producers, so that these latter continue to obtain complementary income from industries of the region, of which a great number deals with metal and mechanic sectors.

As north and northwest of Rio de Janeiro state are distant from the metropolitan area, strong rural features characterize these regions. They include, especially, the production of milk, sugar cane, coffee and fruit. The presence of Petrobras (oil royalties), however, has been changing this situation, for the company employs small farmers. The establishment of a tourist itinerary associated with sugar cane activity is still incipient, besides facing resistance of farm owners.

The intense urbanization and expansion of the metropolitan area has helped to emphasize the singularities of Rio de Janeiro rural space and to intensify conflicts over landownership in the state. There is a rural space in a process of changing, to the point of Rua (2002, p. 24) saying that one may see "urbanities in the rural". These latter "would be all manifestations of urban elements in rural areas". He does not mean, however, "to treat these spaces as formally urban", since they are not opposed to the rural way of life, which is understood as "a particular way of using the space and of social life" (Moreira, 2005, p. 21).

FINAL REMARKS

Numerous activities happen in Brazilian rural space. They include, for instance, farming production of raw material for industry and food as well as industrial production and building of houses, hotels, and pousadas in areas where nature is still preserved. The construction of building demands workforce, and the operation of hotels creates job vacancies, which generate income for farmers. The increase of these non-farming activities relates to public policies for the development of transport and communication infrastructure. These are important conditions for the flow of people and the circulation of goods, information and capital.

Most changes in the rural space are not present in agro-industry production; they correspond to the household output in small farms. It is precisely in the small farm — a space not integrated to the hegemonic model — that substantial changes occur. This is so because the search for areas where nature is preserved aiming to turn them into recreational places such weekend country houses, hotels, and pousadas, attracts urban population and generates jobs to small farmers, which means the possibility of performing other activities beyond farming.

In these spaces, agro-ecological and alternative practices are encouraged as well, despite the use of traditional production means in medium and large properties. These locations correspond to rural areas that were reassessed because they present a more preserved natural environment. Such singularity becomes a commodity consumable by the population, above all those from urban areas.

In Brazil, rural tourism plays an important role as a segment in which socio-spatial relations between the country and the city becomes more dynamic. In Paraíba and Rio de Janeiro states, it has helped to turn urban area and the country into integrate spaces of consume but preserving singularities of the latter that make it attractive for the touristic sector.

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