
27. Extended urbanization: implications for urban and regional theory

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27.1 INTRODUCTION

Inherited categories such as the urban, the rural, the city and the countryside underwent a dramatic change of meaning throughout the twentieth century. These foundational concepts for urban and regional theory – as well as different theoretical apparatus mobilized in the past century – need to be revisited and critically re-interpreted if we are to understand contemporary sociospatial transformations.

Since its double process of ‘implosion–explosion’ (Lefebvre 1970 [2003]), what we used to call ‘the city,’ and particularly ‘the metropolis,’ lost its former attributes, as well as its epistemological power. Concepts such as the urban, the rural and the countryside, otherwise relationally defined against the city, gained other contours and dimensions. The urban and the rural lost their meanings as adjectives – as simple qualifiers of city and countryside as this latter duality is superseded. On the other hand, as nouns, these concepts are being constantly re-signified. The urban virtually gains planetary dimensions and accounts for the extension of the built environment (at various levels onto agrarian or forested regions) as well as for the social relations stemming from multiple urban centralities. The rural, instead, now free from the duality that previously defined it and embedded into the urban–industrial system, finds its novel meanings in various forms of articulation to the capitalist urban–industrial reality (Monte-Mór 2007).

In such a context, the extension of the ‘urban’ not only at metropolitan scale but beyond those limits and onto the ‘region’ itself – exemplified by the ‘city-region,’ among others such as conurbation, meta urbanization or postmetropolis – creates the conditions for total integration of social space under the auspices of the extension of the urban–industrial fabric. In this sense, industrialization created the conditions for the explosion of the urban forms beyond cities to encompass social space as a whole, reaching progressively all corners of the world, with a significant impact in incompletely developed spaces, such as peripheral countries like Brazil, and many others.

In Brazil, the conditions for a double process of urbanization and industrialization were created during the Vargas (1930–1945; 1950–1954) and Kubitschek (1956–1961) governments. Postwar urbanization and industrialization in the country saw a strong inflection as import substitution increased industrial scale and different sectors began to move to inland regions. Large infrastructure projects and major economic redefinitions entailed a rapid growth of urban agglomerations and population – although measuring ‘the urban’ and ‘the rural’ was (and has increasingly been) a contested issue. In Brazil we can clearly see this through critical assessments of the measurement of urban/rural population (Monte-Mór 2004), but also in accounts that are more global in their scope (see Brenner and Schmid 2015).

By 1970, Brazil's historical 'rural' character was already transformed. Even then, the city–countryside dichotomy remained rather clear. Urban and rural spaces, distinct in their sociospatial forms and sociocultural processes, were by no means confused. Contemporarily, however, the boundaries between these spaces are increasingly diffuse and sociospatial forms and processes are increasingly shaped by the 'urban–industrial' (Monte-Mór 1994) that organizes the whole 'social space' (Lefebvre 1974 [1991]).

How have the relations between city and countryside changed since then? How are these relations in contemporary Brazil? What does 'urbanization' currently mean in that country? In order to discuss these questions, we revisit the historical foundations of the city, the countryside, the urban and the rural, as well as the most influential attempts to theorization, especially in the twentieth century. We also present a 'geohistorical' (Soja 2000) account of the Brazilian national space, highlighting its urban and regional restructuring since the second half of the twentieth century and the redefinition of city–countryside relations in processes of territorial integration. The national context, although embedded within many political and sociocultural specificities, is articulated to the Lefebvrian hypothesis of the complete urbanization of society that, in Brazil, finds its counterpart in the 1960s implosion–explosion of the industrial city. We finally re-present the process of 'extended urbanization' (Monte-Mór 1988, 2004) – a crucial theoretical apparatus to understand the production of urban and regional space in the country – and its implications (for theory and practice) while thinking about social space in contemporary Brazil. Not only inherited categories are redefined to improve our understanding of sociospatial transformations, but also the sociocultural and political dimensions of the urban become crucial for concrete struggles and concerns around social reproduction and everyday life. Our aim is to emphasize that the broad sense of the Lefebvrian concept of the 'urban' needs to be clarified to avoid misunderstandings and possible anachronistic interpretations that may mask the nature of the 'urban–industrial' production of space in Brazil, in particular, and in the contemporary world, more generally.

27.2 THE CITY AND THE COUNTRYSIDE, THE URBAN AND THE RURAL

At first, there was the countryside and the city . . . or the city and the countryside, as some contemporary theorists emphasize.¹ Whether made possible by sanctuaries, caves, villages, fortresses and agricultural development (Mumford 1961) or built through the force of human agglomeration – or 'synekism' as Soja (2000) put it when recreating the Greek term *synoikismos* to refer to the creative synergy implicit in the urban agglomeration – before systematic agricultural production, the city always played a crucial role throughout history.

The city was first constituted as the space of concentration of the collective *surplus*, of *power* (dominant classes, decisions, politics), and of the *fête*² (Cunha and Monte-Mór 2000). This centrality concentrated the mechanisms of regulation, religious and cultural manifestations, monuments, market exchanges and collective services supporting everyday life (Lefebvre 1968 [1996]). Its existence, however, did not depend on the territory bounded by the *urbanum*, that is, the space enclosed by plow furrows drawn by the holy oxen. The city (*urbe*), magnified and symbolized by the *urbs* of Rome, gave a full meaning

to the idea of civilization. It became the territory that materialized the society politically defined by the *polis* or *civitas* (from *civis*) (Monte-Mór 2007).

Originally, the city was the political and mercantile center that subordinated the countryside to its politico-ideological (and certainly military) domination. In many cases, the necessity to realize production in its marketplaces engendered radical transformations through the massive entry of industrial production into cityspace (Lefebvre 1970 [2003]). From the privileged space of collective surplus, power, and the *fête* – the three-dimensional *oeuvre* of civilization (*civis*) – the city has become the space of production itself that brings together dominant and dominated classes and subordinated the countryside to its domination. It became the prime space of collective life and, at the same time, the territory of modern industry that concentrated the required conditions of production (and reproduction).

The ‘countryside,’ in turn, represented the circumventing natural space mostly referenced to a centrality. Formerly held as the privileged space of life and agrarian production, the countryside lost its potentially self-sufficient character after its complete subordination to the industrial city (Lefebvre 1970 [2003]), which encompassed not only the scope of production and its realization, but also its dependence to the creation of ‘rural’ products, services and technologies generated in the innovative centrality (Jacobs 1969).

Raymond Williams (1973, 1983) shows that the word ‘city’ (from the French ‘*cit *’ and the Latin ‘*civitas*’) paradigmatically appeared in the thirteenth century referring to ideal or biblical cities (against ‘borough’ and ‘town’) and qualifying representations of power: ‘provincial city,’ ‘city-cathedral,’ and so on (cf. Cardoso 1990 on the concepts of *polis*, *civitas*, and *urbs*). The word ‘city’ was later used to make reference to the financial center of London and became generalized only in the Victorian period as a contrast to the countryside.

The ideas of ‘city’ and ‘countryside’ were thus developed as antagonistic co-constitutive elements of human space. These substantive elements gave rise to their respective qualifications: the urban, proper of the city, and the rural, proper of the countryside (*rus-ruris*). The term ‘urban’ – an adjective lost for centuries and recovered in the Baroque period – started to designate features of the mercantile city and its inhabitants. In Portuguese, the ‘urban’ (adjective) was rescued in the sixteenth century and made reference to the city-empire. In English, it was recovered only in the seventeenth century to refer particularly to the main city of the British Empire under construction (Cayne 1987).

From the late nineteenth century onwards, the term ‘urban’ and the concrete world of urban life have grown to imply industrialization – either by the localization of industrial production within the territory of cities or by its influence in articulating industrial and service centers between cities and agrarian regions. Therefore, the imaginary of urban life surpassed the city to encompass industrialization, production and consumption as well as the reproduction of the capitalist relations of production formed and developed in the urban–industrial context (Lefebvre 1970 [2003]).

The agglomeration economies provided the synergistic economic articulations to the countryside and the formation of an urban–industrial culture. Also, as required by the productive (and reproductive) process of the industrial economy, agglomeration economies ensured the concentration of the *general conditions of production* – a Marxian concept that first referred to energy and transportation before being reviewed and amplified by French theorists Lojkine (1981) and Topalov (1979) amidst the debate of the contradictions of capitalist urbanization in the context of ‘state monopolist capitalism.’

Within the Brazilian context, the meaning of the general conditions of production was subsequently extended to include infrastructure, state regulation, labor legislation and costs, social security, public and private services, among other 'urban traits,' and also making reference to urban–industrial conditions (Monte-Mór 2004).

In this context, the 'city' as a coherent urban–industrial agglomeration unit became the major theoretical and methodological target of scholars from several disciplines – especially for its putative potential in promoting 'progress' and 'development.' Agglomeration economies, for instance, were identified and studied by urban and regional economic theorists since August Lösch (1967).

In the beginning of the twentieth century, various attempts have been made in order to understand the modern transformations of 'urban' and 'rural' as *adjectives*, that is, qualifiers of city and countryside. The Chicago School, in its early sociological and economical approaches created one of the most influential theoretical framework for addressing urban–rural issues, one that informed regional science and the planning practices of the following decades. In an attempt to characterize and delimit the differences between city and countryside their authors proposed a continuum from rural to urban. They defined ways of life and analyzed patterns of consumption, forms of social organization and location, among other aspects of 'modern life.' The theory of modernization developed in the expansionist phase of twentieth-century capitalism was heavily inspired by Chicago's urban–regional sociology and economicist approaches based on what would later be critically understood as the expansion of capitalist relations of production in space.³

However, that perspective confused sociospatial processes with ecological forms and sociocultural characteristics. It was widely criticized by postwar neo-Marxists for the reification of spatial forms and the limitations implicit in their attempt to establish an 'urban science' or a 'spatial science' – see, for instance, Castells (1972 [1977]) and his critique of 'urban ideology.' The question of metropolitan transformation in the global North at the beginning of the century was much more related to forms of capitalist sociospatial organization than to 'ecological' and/or cultural practices of cityspace. These early attempts to attribute the cause and nature of spatial transformations to size, density, and heterogeneity did not resist systematic criticism.

Further attempts tried to understand the function of the city for capitalist accumulation. Manuel Castells (1972 [1977]) was very influential in his structuralist proposition that the city would be the privileged locus of collective reproduction of the labor force. It would particularly bring together the means of collective consumption, thus defining the prime function of the urban environment under capitalism. His critics then insisted that the agglomerative function of the city outweighed the 'urban question' of labor-force reproduction by adding to the production of complex use values linked to the 'general conditions of production' demanded by industrial capitalism (Lojkin 1981; Topalov 1979).

Henri Lefebvre proposed in broad lines after 1968 that the industry and its logic centered on exchange value had an effect of de-politicization over the city, formerly a privileged locus of *collective use values* (see Lefebvre 1968 [1996]). He denounced a class strategy to expel the working class from the urban centrality through the functional fragmentation of the city while emphasizing and anticipating the virtual resurgence of everyday life, the struggles over the right to urban life and the importance of social reproduction in the urban environment.

These questions, at first concerning the city, would then be extended to regional, national and virtually planetary scales together with the uneven extension of the urban–industrial

fabric. The implosion–explosion of the industrial city extended not only the materiality of cityspace but also the urban condition expressed in the recreation of urban *praxis*, in the re-politicization of urban space around use value and in the tendency towards an *urban society* able to overcome the industrial logic.

In other words, the extension of infrastructure (proper of the *urbe*), service networks, legislation, organization of labor markets and land, capitalist relations of production entailed the extension of the germ of politics (*polis*) and citizenship (*civitas*). At the same time, it entails the extension of capitalist relations of productions and the activation of landscapes that respond to the sociometabolic demands of larger urban agglomerations. It is in this sense that one can say that the urban environment ceases to be restricted to the space of the city and transforms itself into the total social space reaching planetary scales (cf. Brenner and Schmid 2014, 2015, on contemporary urban processes and epistemologies in the context of ‘planetary urbanization’).

The urban becomes then a metaphor to understand the contemporary social space penetrated by urban–industrial relations (Monte-Mór 2015). At the same time, the urban ends the long held epistemological dichotomy of city and countryside as it constitutes a third element in this formerly dual opposition (Monte-Mór 2007; see also Lefebvre (1974 [1991]) for the idea of dialectics of the triad, and Soja (1996) and Schmid (2008) for critical interpretations of the concept). In other words, this final stage of countryside subordination to the city together with the implosion–explosion of the latter gives rise to a third dimension in the countryside-city dialectic relation expressed by the urban.

City and countryside are thus redefined by the industrial logic of capitalist production and accumulation, losing much of their former substantive original traits. The urban and the rural as adjectives now represent remnants of the already disappeared substantive social spaces that are now transformed and integrated into the ‘total space of our days’ (Santos 1994). In this context, the concepts of city and countryside no longer express concrete and fully recognizable realities.

The ‘urban’ (as a noun) is now a level of social totality that mediates *global* processes (of state, capital, planning) and processes of everyday life. It expresses itself both in urban centralities and in the urban–industrial fabric that extends beyond cities in a process of ‘extended urbanization’ (Monte-Mór 1988, 1994, 2004) that contains the seeds of the Lefebvrian ‘urban-utopia’ (Monte-Mór 2015).

27.3 THE URBAN AND THE RURAL IN THE BRAZILIAN GEOHISTORICAL CONTEXT

The urban environment in Brazil was constrained to cities, head of religious and civic festivals, arts, information centers and cultural manifestations at various scales. Cities were the headquarters of political power, apparatus of the state, privileged space of laws, organized land market, civil and military organizations. They concentrated local and regional collective surpluses manifested in the form of complex use values: urban and social services, monuments, collective facilities, financial, commercial and industrial capitals, and the few advanced support services of production and consumption. They were also marketplaces for commercializing products from the countryside as well as small

manufacturing and a few industrial goods. They also concentrated wage labor in the more dynamic sectors of the economy.

The rural environment, on the other hand, was marked by family and kinship relationships present on farms and agricultural properties of varying sizes, mostly supported by pre-capitalist, familiar, and/or servile (partners, sharecroppers, settlers, among others) relations of production. It was the materialization of the export-oriented agrarian model that still dominates large portions of South America.

At the same time, the rural was the 'rustic,' the space of subsistence, of the excluded and the non-owners (since Brazilian rural oligarchies lived in cities or in small towns under their own control) and were thus represented as the space of illiteracy, of absence, popularly known for the lack of collective services, energy supply, transport and communications systems. It could be recognized by the 'non-integration' and 'non-access' to modern industrial goods. Roughly, the rural was *represented* as archaic, the non-modern, the territory of isolation and the space of non-politics. While symbolizing the 'primitive,' the rural also accounted for the majority of the Brazilian territory (in both statistical reports and popular imaginary) and therefore had to be superseded if the country were to overcome its putative condition of underdevelopment. Brazilian economist Celso Furtado (1983), for example, discussed the 'myth of progress and development' as well as the Brazilian condition of underdevelopment and technological dependency.

Getúlio Vargas, who came to power in 1930, was responsible for the so-called 'Brazilian bourgeois revolution,' implementing the beginnings of the industrialization process in Brazil. Using the economic surplus from the rural oligarchies, he created the conditions for both the emergence of an industrial class and the formation of regulated labor force, through a series of labor laws that only now, after the 2016 parliamentary *coup d'état*, is being disrupted. Vargas' first period, which became a dictatorship in 1937 (*Estado Novo*), focused on capital and intermediate goods industrial production, initiating the 'March to the West' which eventually led to the occupation of the Center-West and Amazonia. Ousted in 1945, Vargas was re-elected president in 1950, when he began to open Brazil for foreign capital to produce durable (Fordist) goods, particularly the metal-mechanic industry led by multinational corporations from those countries who lost the war and accepted his nationalist requirements in terms of nationalization of production and profit remittance.

However, it was only in the Kubitschek government (1956–1961) that imports substitution brought a more significant penetration of Taylorism and an incipient Fordism. From the 1950s, Brazilian planning grew to achieve regional and national scales in an attempt to promote territorial integration and reduce regional inequality – such as the creation of Sudene⁴ and the construction of Brasília. However, this state-led process of industrialization (and urbanization) through imports substitution was spatially selective, restricted to larger cities and encompassed only modern sectors of the economy – industry, commerce, banking, technical services and public facilities. The penetration of foreign capital – at that time limited and closely controlled by the federal government – also produced a concentration of capital, labor, technology and possibilities of sociospatial transformation in big cities, and more particularly and strongly, in those commanding the process of industrialization.

This *concentration of development* reached large trading centers and regional political cities that led a still incipient process of industrialization. Brazilian geographer Milton Santos (1994) used the term 'urban archipelago' to describe this set of disarticulated cities

in a fragmented and rural Brazil. These urban centers reunited the general conditions of production demanded by industrial capitalism – such as electricity and transportation infrastructure, communication networks, health and educational services as well as labor regulations, minimum wage and pensions, and social security programs. Since they concentrated the means of collective consumption, these centers were also the target of massive migration in the 1950s.

The military coup in 1964 inaugurated a new phase of urban–industrial transformation still grounded on the discourse of progress, economic development and industrialization. On the one hand, it promoted the economic and spatial concentration of growth—especially in the second phase of the military period when public investment aimed to fasten growth through industrial production. On the other hand, there was a process of de-concentration driven by the need to expand and integrate the Brazilian market of durable goods locally produced by foreign companies. Geopolitical requirements related to the interests of the military and its ideologies of national security were also responsible for the discourse and practice of economic integration beyond southeastern Brazil, the country's privileged regional industrial center.

Although in radical different conditions, the military's economic and geopolitical project ended up continuing the movement initiated by Vargas and Kubitschek towards national 'progress' and regional integration. It moved forward the process of integrating the Brazilian territory by extending transportation and communication infrastructure onto Midwestern and Northern Brazil as well as into agricultural and national frontiers, such as Amazonia. In addition, the massive entry of foreign capital—this time with Fordist features and free from state regulation—transformed the Brazilian industrial profile. It was no longer focused on intermediate goods or capital goods under state control for nationalization of production and remittance of profits. Rather, it became open to foreign capital—particularly after the 1967 Constitution—mostly focused on durable goods.

Furthermore, the state was concerned with creating and extending the general conditions of production demanded by industrial capitalism to the country as a whole. The Second National Development Plan (II PND, 1975–1979) reinforced this inflection by developing policies for the production of space: transport and energy infrastructure to support production and construction of access and conditions for the exploitation of natural resources. It also comprised the creation and extension of social housing financing and its supporting infrastructure for the reproduction of the labor force while spreading labor legislation and social programs to the territory as a whole.

The massive investments both concentrated in the center of the major cities together with a scenario of fragmented urban and regional space produced the 'implosion–explosion' phenomena described by Lefebvre (1970 [2003]). Investments in transport infrastructure to meet the needs created by a growing automobile production (freeways, elevated bridges, transportation plans) and public transportation (subways and complex bus systems) in the central areas of major industrial metropolises created the conditions for their restructuring.

On the other hand, the 'explosion' of the industrial metropolises over their immediate hinterlands led to the institutionalization of metropolitan regions forming urbanized regions and urban sub-centralities around the main cities of the country. Soon, regional middle-size cities received similar investments and extended their connections onto their

hinterland. Industrial production was also under a process of de-concentration that began to be clear in the 1970s when São Paulo lost relative attractiveness and new industrial projects began to be distributed in other states and/or regions of the country. From the point of view of consumption, it meant extending the conditions for the consumption of Fordist goods to the national space in order to make viable the industrial park under construction.

In the 1960s and 1970s, this extension of capitalist relations of production and of the general conditions of production (and reproduction of the labor force) reached most of the national space. Brazilian influential economist Francisco de Oliveira (1978) stated that 'there are no agrarian problems in Brazil: all problems are now urban.' There was certainly a problem of interpretation: it was not that agrarian problems no longer existed. They continued to exist (and even grew since then), although they often changed their nature due to the process of industrialization in the countryside and the transformation of the relations of production in agriculture and resource extraction, among other issues. What seemed to no longer exist were the rural problems connected with rusticity, isolation, disarticulation, and exclusion from the countryside in relation to the modern world. Virtually, the 'rural' environment was totally integrated to Brazil's urban-industrial environment by the end of the 1970s.

It seems clear that this somewhat metaphorical interpretation did not correspond—or even intended to correspond—to the whole national reality. The important emphasis must be placed on the changing sociospatial dynamics in Brazil since the production of national social space was being dominated by urban and industrial movements. In other words, it means that the country's major questions, from then on, were refuted by and referred to an urban-industrial universe that broke the dichotomous forms of city and countryside and took over national space—whether in the metropolitan peripheries, the *cerrado* or the *caatinga*, or else even in indigenous reserve areas and in the Amazon as a whole, although more clearly in its urban-industrial agricultural and mining frontier (Monte-Mór 2004).

This interpretation finds its basis in the studies of Henri Lefebvre, in his understanding of the emerging urban society and of the urban revolution. It is a broad process of urbanization beyond cities that reaches the countryside and virtually all national space. It is a tridimensional dialectical synthesis that overcomes the city-countryside relation within a collective and political logic, centered on the struggle for everyday life and privileging the aspects of social reproduction. At the same time, it presents itself on a variety of densities, sizes and forms of sociospatial organization but all of it within an urban-industrial logic integrated by the general conditions of production (and reproduction). This contradictory logic and myriad of sociospatial forms is expressed in the process of *extended urbanization*.

27.4 EXTENDED URBANIZATION: URBAN PRAXIS AND URBAN EPISTEMOLOGIES

The contemporary question regarding sociospatial organization becomes as such: in a context of extended urbanization (virtual urban society, politicization of space and extension of capitalist relations of production), what happens to the city and the countryside—or equivalently, what happens to 'urban' and 'rural' as adjectives? What about the nouns? Can we still speak of 'rural' in a society and a territory that are virtually urbanized?

As elaborated here, the process of extended urbanization produces an overcoming of the city–countryside *dichotomy*. The analogous opposition urban–rural (as adjectives of city and countryside) have thus completely lost its explanatory power as epistemological categories. Under a complete urbanization of society, as the city–countryside opposition fades another opposition emerges, that of the centrality and the extended urban fabric accounting for both the built environment and the aforementioned political dimension. Since urbanization also entails the production of multiple centralities, the contemporary task for theory encompasses the unveiling of the relation between different urban centralities and the territories of extended urbanization. It also involves the production of a new vocabulary to differentiate social processes and spatial forms in a completely (although unevenly) urbanized society.

This seems to be the direction of the contemporary agenda on ‘planetary urbanization’ (Brenner and Schmid 2014, 2015; Brenner 2014): to put into question the foundational concept of the city while producing an ex-centric Lefebvrian point of view to understand sociospatial transformations.⁵ This agenda encompasses a strong critique to the urban-adjective through the critique of the ‘urban age discourse.’⁶ It also entails a critique of ‘methodological cityism’—the obsession of urban scholars with a supposedly privileged category and lens to understand urban processes (Angelo and Wachsmuth 2015). The city was left to a condition of ideology having lost its epistemological power (although maintaining its historical existence) and perpetuating itself as image or representation (Lefebvre 1970 [2003]; Wachsmuth 2014; see also Roy 2016a).

It is the role of theory to emphasize this ideological condition of the city and stress the importance of urban questions beyond the agglomeration since ‘city’ and ‘countryside’ will not cease to exist in both social imaginary and academic debates. Certainly, we can still identify, for instance, various forms of social and spatial organization typical of the old countryside at varying intensities in different Brazilian regions. However, these areas are, to some degree, extensively urbanized—in terms of spatial forms *and* social processes. The ‘rural,’ taken in its cultural sense evidently still exists. It is the meaning of what we call *roça* in Brazil: a displacement out of the urban centrality; a getaway to allotments (often small farms) where one can seek for a stronger presence of nature or for bucolic nostalgia; often a search for ‘wilderness’ as opposed to the material sophistication of the urban centrality; a (imaginary) break from urban–industrial life; a dream of being sequestered from a particular ‘urban sensorium’ (Goonewardena 2005)—noises, smells, landscapes, sensations, ideas.

This stronger presence of nature—also proposed in the modernist city, from New York to Brasilia—does not mean a ‘ruralization.’ It is the attempt to produce a particular sensorial environment for human (often upper classes) perception through a simulacrum of nature. It can be easily found in large urban agglomerations such as Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, and even in the concrete jungle of São Paulo or at its metropolitan peripheries. It is certainly to be found in large areas that developed from industrial cities such as London, Paris, Berlin or Chicago, or even areas that never were a ‘real’ city, such as the conurbation of Los Angeles that succeeded the *pueblo* and *missions* that congregated farmhouses and orange plantations.

Here, we are no longer speaking about the countryside or its qualifier. Rather, we emphasize *the rural*—an autonomous noun—that can be better understood as a relational concept as one identifies his or her own sense of *roça* in relation to a particular lived experience. In Tucumã, a very small Amazonian planned settlement in Southern Pará, twenty-five years

ago, a taxi driver stated that, on weekends, he ‘escapes from the confusion of the city and goes to the *roça*’ (see Monte-Mór 2004). For him, it is very clear that his small town of six thousand inhabitants is distinct from his *roça*—his little farm where he draws milk from the cows and chews cane. A place where there is no electricity and piped water and no sound of horns or daily smoke from trucks. Where the clock does not rule his work. Where television (and now Internet) culture does not dominate social space. Where he can, even for brief moments, isolate himself from the urban–industrial reality—which even there may be hegemonic. Likewise, any taxi driver in Belo Horizonte knows that on Friday afternoon the ‘road to the *roça*,’ as popularly said in Brazil, is congested by the exit of the BR-040 highway towards the private condominiums, gated communities and weekend ranches (*sítios*) in the southern route of the metropolitan area. Of course, after many metropolitan dwellers chose to live in these condominiums in the past decades, the local municipalities around Belo Horizonte (and in other parts of Brazil) are striving to transform these ‘rural spaces’ into ‘urban spaces’ so that they can charge higher ‘urban’ taxes.⁷

The rural in Brazil, taken as a noun and not as a mere adjective for the countryside, is a relational concept and can be understood as ‘interstitial spaces that remain relatively isolated from capitalist modernization and so everyday life still answers to the local dynamics that are not dependent on the rhythms of the urban–industrial reality’ (Castriota and Monte-Mór 2016). Ultimately, although related to the urban, the existence of the rural is not an opposition to the (increasingly planetary) urban environment. In other words, the rural is not ‘constitutive outside’ of the urban (Brenner 2014). This is, of course, a contested issue subjected to debate within Brazilian scholarship. João Rua (2006), for instance, considers the ‘rural’ a crucial spatiality of contemporary capitalism that affects identities and territorialities at multiple scales. Urban extension beyond cities would thus constitute ‘urbanities in the rural.’

Part of the categorical misunderstandings regarding urban and rural today is related to the confusion between the rural and the agrarian—briefly discussed by Milton Santos (2005). In Brazil, there are vast agrarian spaces that maintain the historical structure of land concentration, with large single-crop plantations supporting agribusiness for exports. However, the municipalities with an agrarian economic base are increasingly urbanized comprising what Milton Santos (2002) called the ‘techno scientific informational milieu’—even if residences and economic activities remain in spaces with low density and strong ‘green’ base.

The relationship between the agrarian and the industrial has been changing significantly. Advanced industrial processes rely on agrarian processes: a pulp mill, for example, necessarily has a silviculture zone from which to extract its raw material. A number of other contemporary industries also have their inputs in forestry or agriculture. On the other hand, we are talking about increasingly mechanized agricultural processes organized by an industrial logic. The (otherwise rural) agribusiness and the agricultural economy focused on the exploitation of large capital and the production of commodities are increasingly integrated to the urban–industrial economy.

However, the intensification of the double process of industrialization and urbanization of the agrarian world is evident. If the rural as a landscape persists as a founding sense—as a myth—then, as the urban–industrial increases its intensity and extension onto the countryside, the myth becomes a simulacrum. It can be expressed in the ‘cowboy,’ businessperson and worker in pickup trucks playing loud ‘country’ or *sertanejo* songs

informed by television practices. Comparably, it can be the simulacrum of a new rural naturalism, informed by the alternative and ecological sense gestated in the central and peripheral areas of the world's great metropolises.

In this way, rural spaces become everyday more the extensions of urban life. The so-called *novo rural* (new rural) in Brazil refers to the small farms, secondary country houses and refuges as above mentioned directly connected to everyday city life. In this sense, the contemporary rural submerges either in industrial processes (like agribusinesses) and their productive logic, or else in urban extensive processes focused on everyday life and the quality of collective reproduction.

So, what do city and country, and urban and rural mean today? How do these nouns and adjectives represent the complex reality of an integrated world with such extreme differences and manifestations of sociospatial settlements and arrangements for economic growth and for everyday life?

One can still think of modern (old) functional and cultural logics, but the hybridity and complexity of the myriad of sociospatial forms and processes will always show themselves present, making the attempts at dichotomous and rigid classifications look like highly reductionist and limited analytical artifices. As Lefebvre suggested, it is necessary to aim at the totality.

Totality is now linked to the virtuality of the urban society, we would argue (with Lefebvre). Nature has gained a new and definitive status and prominence in our globalized world. Our relations to economic growth, to development and to nature itself are being rapidly redefined, making room for radical criticisms and for the dismantling of established old practices and concepts. New approaches to contemporary life and to the future that bring to the center of our debates radical societal restructurings that place our concerns about collective reproduction (of humanity itself) in the planet at levels of visibility not seen in centuries, at least in the so-called Western world. 'Is there a world to come?' ask Viveiros de Castro and Danowsky (2014). For them, we must learn to be indigenes quite quickly, if we are to survive.

Extended urbanization, seen from its transformative and utopian perspective, could be one of the innovative responses to critical industrialism. The extension of the urban onto social space as a whole, in its innumerable forms and intensities, dialectically recreates at various scales the most diverse sociospatial manifestations which, although under capitalist hegemony, combine with local and regional non-capitalist relations of production to produce different modes of social and economic integration. The urban—encompassing both the city and countryside, as well as the multiple centralities and (extendedly) urbanized regions – creates the sociospatial and political conditions for the materialization and the strengthening of those transformative social forms and processes. Of course, it also carries within it the most disruptive capitalist forces that extend decadent industrial processes as a dominant tendency within globalization, as it destroys peoples' territories and their different (or alternative) ways of living to give room to capital accumulation. Therefore, extended urbanization dialectically contains both the virus of old industrial days and the seeds of the urban epoch (announced by Lefebvre in his 'urban revolution') that may supersede it. The sociopolitical and territorial struggles should define multiple outcomes, particularly in the peripheries of globalized capitalism.

Indeed, the extension of the 'urban fabric' produces diverse sociospatial forms and processes that always carry within them the politicization of social space, stemming

from urban centralities at all levels, from global cities to local hamlets. Politics (from *polis*) and citizenship (from *civitas*) reach everywhere along with the production of urban–industrial space. In so doing, to the relative astonishment of some and the hopes of others, it redefines social relations throughout the territory. In other words the urban, seen as the privileged locus of collective reproduction and of creative synekism, becomes the primary and most powerful mediation force in the contemporary world, from global cities to Indian villages. The possibilities raised by the extension of the ‘techno-scientific and informational milieu,’ described by Milton Santos (2002), has been equipping the territory with the infrastructure and objects required by the contemporary stage of capitalist development. How those peripheral spaces might draw alternatively from their own contexts and such a hyper modernization, is something to investigate thoroughly.

We are particularly interested in the process of politicization and construction of citizenship, and of self-awareness, democratic and non-alienated subjects. People concerned with their lifespace, from local to planetary scales. Urbanization, both concentrated in cities and extended throughout the urban fabric, can be taken as a metaphor—or a metonymy—for the political organization of social space (taken in its broad and radical senses, towards self-managed lives). The urban, this virtuality of self-managed *differential spaces* in which urban life, produces the conditions for solidarity and creativeness in cities, towns, savannahs, forests, cultivated fields and social space as whole, eventually freed from the claws of capitalist *abstract space*.⁸

What’s there left for theory, then? It seems that the urban perspective is a privileged point of view, a window from which to look at the contemporary, and the future of social space, while at the same time investigating its past (Roy, 2016b). Either we define lifespace as our central concern, or decadent industrialism will destroy our world, it seems quite clear. Lived space must be at the center of our everyday lives. The urban, thus, this concrete utopia that bears all the possibilities of collective reproduction at its best manifestations and of social appropriation of lifespaces, heralds the possible futures. Contemporary urban theory must, therefore, aim for totality while at the same time focusing on difference, on the myriad of new possibilities contained in such an extended process or urbanization.

Theory must also be critical and political, in the broadest and most radical sense of the self-managed polis, of citizenship as extended to social space as a whole, as well as inclusive enough to embrace the amplified diversities a globally integrated world present to us. This seems to produce a transformation in the ways we have looked at urbanization and regional space, implying the focus on diverse and extended territories as opposed to the emphasis on concentrated processes in the downtown areas of major metropolises. It certainly seems to open new fields of inquiry and new windows from where to address contemporary urbanization.

27.5 NOTES

1. The neolithic ‘agrarian revolution’ was preceded (or escorted) by an ‘urban revolution.’ The debate on the primacy of the city over the countryside was first put forward by Jane Jacobs (1969) and further discussed by Soja (2000) and Taylor (2012). Although criticized (see Smith et al. 2014), this view has very recently gained other contours with research in Amazonian archaeology (Heckenberger and Neves 2009) and forms of ‘pre-Columbian urbanisms’ (Heckenberger et al. 2008) and regional galactic clusters of towns and villages. Ultimately, increased evidences show that ancient spatial practices of Amerindian societies produced the

- Amazon forest as we know it, including fertile soils on the top of previously infertile lands for agriculture and hyper-dominant plant species (Neves 2005).
2. The *Fête* is used by Lefebvre to refer to the cultural and sociopolitical dimensions of urban life, linked to festivities and the ludic appropriation of spaces of encounters.
 3. Louis Wirth and Ezra Park are the most famous representatives of the Chicago urban sociology tradition while Robert Redfield, Ernest Burgess and Henry Richardson, among others, explored the economic dimensions of city form (Saunders 2003).
 4. The Superintendency for the Development of the Northeast (Sudene) was created in 1959 to address problems of economic stagnation in that poorest region in Brazil, expanding the efforts in the late 1940s that created the São Francisco Basin Development Company (today, Codevasf) after the TVA experience in the United States.
 5. For a thorough discussion of convergences and divergences between the contemporary agenda on planetary urbanization and the Brazilian literature on extended urbanization, see Castriota (2016a, 2016b).
 6. Brenner and Schmid (2014) present a critique to the ‘urban age discourse’ derived from the UN-Habitat (2007) statement that human society crossed a putative urban threshold since more than 50 percent of the world’s population would be living in cities from 2008. This is a clear example of how the urban-adjective can be instrumentalized rendering invisible crucial urban questions beyond ‘the city’—although often produced by large urban agglomerations.
 7. For a discussion of ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ as governmental categories, see Roy (2016b).
 8. Lefebvre (1974 [1991]) uses various adjectives to qualify space as he discusses its production: *abstract space* is described as the space produced by industrial capitalism that tends towards homogeneity and fragmentation while *differential space* is produced by the social appropriation based on everyday life, the conditions for collective creativity and encounters that are at the basis of urban life.

27.6 REFERENCES

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