

MODELING OF THE CHANGES AND RECENT EVOLUTION OF THE SPANISH RURAL SYSTEM

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Complexity, dynamism and diversity are consubstantial characteristics to the territory. They flow out from its condition of complex and not-linear, subject system, according to Veiga (2006), to spatio-temporal changes derived from the multiple interactions between its components and with other territories, which, by its impact on the value of the resources, ends up influencing on its initial state, the composition and distribution of the territorial capital and the flows of interchange with the surroundings.

Although internally it has a continuous character, for its analysis it fragments in smaller classes. The division between rural and urban is classic, each one susceptible to be perceived like a system in which state, activity and evolution influence the parameters of the other (that is the environment). For centuries, the rural areas have provided food, sources of energy, raw materials and human resources to urban. This operation was put as a general principle of interaction between both during the stage of modernization and productivist development of the Seventies, Sixties and Eighties of the last century, when the strong expansion of the city originated the consolidation of the rural area as periphery subsidiary to the urban (Ceña, 1992). At present, the characteristics of the dependency have varied and the complementariness between both has increased, by the direction of the rural areas to the provision of other goods and services, especially in the dimensions residential, natural-ecological and recreational-tourist. From it, impacts emanate on the rural economic functionality, the amount of effective human that it lodges and its spatial distribution, the cultural rules, the valuation of this territory and the public intervention developed in it.

The rurality has progressed from an essentially agrarian functionality towards another one initially of multi-activity and later multifunctional-territorial profile, which has fed back multiplying the variety of resources that is prepared to supply, of territorial functions that is able to develop and the consequent diversity of demands that can meet. Really, the multi-activity, in intern key, and the multifunctionality, in external quid, both related to the transition binomials productivity/postproductivity, agrarian modernization/territorial development and specialization/multi-functionality, are the essential keys to understand the advance towards a new state of the rural territory.

But the changes of state have been gradual. In one first stage, the answer took the form of structural crisis, in the demographic, the economic and the cultural, with remarkable track, also, in the landscaping-environmental. Later, the differences of territorial model and ways of life between rural and the urban areas have declined. Finally, during the last decade, an economic and demographic recovery is taking place, to which the new valuation of the same, developed between the urban inhabitants in a cultural postmodern frame is not stranger. However, the trend is not uniform and today contrasted models coexist with a rurality, whose characteristics depend on the quota, mix and intensity of participation of the responses that have been activated: strengthening the extensive farming, combination agro-ranching, agrarian intensification, part-time farming and labor multifunctionality, industrialization, tertiarisation, urban development, ...

To model the changes experienced by the Spanish rural territory, considering the factors and processes with greater explanatory value and the evolution in the state of the rural areas to which they have lead, constitutes the basic objective of this work. Our hypothesis is that the state and intention of the rural system have been transformed during the last five decades, since the territorial functions that carried out have been altered and the relations and unit field-city have been modified; all this has originated, as well, new interactions of causation and implication between the variables that form the rural system and between rural and the urban one. We think that it is advancing towards the consolidation of a new territorial category that, although it maintains numerous characteristics of the classic rurality, does not agree with the traditional of rural or urban.

The notion of system is the methodologic-conceptual key that spins our argumentations and their schematic presentation in the form of diagrams of elements and processes. To consider the rural territory as a system provides an ensemble of knowledge suitable to the objective to model its evolution qualitatively. Our models, graphically solved in the form of diagrams of elements and processes, consider the essential of a reality whose functioning is represented through the mechanisms of connection between the parts. The basic components of the diagram are nodes and vectors; the nodes represent the elements and processes and the vectors the connections, that are symbolized by means of shoots with an arrow that indicates a direction that responds to the questions «it affects» or «it influences», considering implicitly the idea «as long as all the rest the same».

The interpretation of the Spanish rural system is based on the changes that it has suffered during the last five decades, on the modification of some of their territorial functions, as a result of the demographic, economic and environmental impacts derived from the greater dynamism that has characterized the urban means, in a first stage because of their greater comparative advantages and later their greater capacity of attraction and innovation; to it the rural territories have adapted. Therefore, the interaction between rural and urban territories has been solved by means of the functional reconfiguration of the rural areas. Also, the circuits of interaction between the rural territories have been modified and new types of centrality have emerged; in fact a predominant readjustment, according to the economical and cultural dynamics in the general territorial system has taken place. In the same form, the parcel of the continous rural-urban has gained in surface and importance; this gain comes favored by the increasing amplitude of the life river basins of citizens who operate in a complex system, more and more extensive and that includes in a combined way the rural

thing and the urban thing. Finally, it can be affirmed that the rural interval, as category of symbiosis between the rural and urban scopes, also of *neururalidad* for Gorenstein and others (2007), is growing.

Since the beginning of the Sixties in the last century, the rural system has happened through three stages, although we don't value them like closed compartment, because the impact of the processes has surpassed the temporary limits of each. Generally and with few exceptions, the sign of the relations of implication between the variables has been mainly positive, reason why the internal divergences have tended to grow, as much when that serves to explain situations of territorial deterioration (positive entropy), like when they help to understand those of progressive improvement (negative entropy); almost the absence of interrelations with negative sign demonstrates that the homeostatic mechanisms have not worked correctly or have been insufficient to guarantee their stability and dynamic equilibrium.

Homeostatic deficit, progressive destruction of some autopoietic mechanisms (among which the traditional agreement between rurality and agrarian action is one of the best examples) and lack of internal dynamism, are the factors that explain that the initial response would result in a crisis of the basic parameters of the traditional rurality in most of the rural Spanish areas; that is to say, a structural crisis that deteriorated the value like such of numerous resources. Only later, by impact of the environment, other morfogenetic mechanisms have been activated progressively that have given transit to a functional reconfiguration, with a decline of the entropy and recovery of a certain internal balance because of the best working of the neguentropic mechanisms. Both phases are separated by the integration of Spain in the European Union and the beginning in the application of the communitarian policies, as well as of the reinforcement of the multi-activity in this part of the territory derived from the gradual emergence of new urban demands on the rural resources. At the moment a clear dynamism exists to which is not stranger the consolidation of postmodern behaviors in the set of the Spanish society, nor the turn undergone by the CAP, which at heart supposes the modification, in key of multifunctionality, of the form to understand the rurality and its participation in the general territorial system. Consequently, we are gradually evolving towards a new state of the rural system, with parallel genesis of a rurality that is juxtaposed, in cases, or it combines, in others, with that of traditional and agrarian sign that it still persists. The tertiarisation of the rural is, without a doubt, the distinctive key of the tendency, without forgetting the weight of the new factors of territorial development, as they are the social capital, the institutional weave, the infrastructures and services of telecommunications and the enterprise weave.

In the design of this new scene it is striking the participation of the objectives of social equity and environmental sustainability as an alternative and counterweight to the goal of economic development, which according to Trpin (2005) allows to point the idea that, from those new uses and activities, in theoretical terms, another rurality is being defined. The characteristic agrarian development of the first stage caused perverse effects (social, economic and environmental) that began to declare in all their intensity during the second; the changes operated in the society during the last decade of the XX century (with the consolidation of the idea that the rural thing means something more than agriculture, the revaluation of the life and the rural culture, the investment of the demographic flows, the

renewed preoccupation by the environment, the changes in the consumption habits, the possibility that the rural means begins to play an active role in the creation of new jobs,...) they explain the necessity to correct them, which is also in the origin of the change of state in the rural system. To it, the new conception of the development in horizontal key is not indifferent either, where the territory is a synergic, articulated and interrelated all and, therefore, it is in it where the true potential for the development resides; to conclude, paraphrasing to Veltz, the territory, if long time ago it was the problem, today is the solution.

That new rurality in which the primary one has stopped being the main source of rent we conceptualize, it, in cases, like a «reinvention» of the rural functions and/or, in others, like «redefinition» of the same, for that reason if the second exposition dominates, it always hasn't a real character. This takes us to two conclusions. First, in this dynamic it influences the recovery of competitiveness by the valuation of new resources. Secondly, the increase of the multi-activity causes that the internal complexity of the rural territory grows, that there is a renewed creativity and clear gains of sustainability and dynamism.

In this background, the main tendencies in the advance towards that new state of the rural system are their greater economic effectiveness, the temporary coincidence of the processes of demographic revitalisation in some parts and abandonment of the territory and resetting of the settlement system in others, and the advances in the rural-urban complementariness.

With respect to the economic activity, its greater dynamism isn't stranger to the constant growth of the demands associated to the rural tourism, neither to the consolidation of a competitive agro-industrial complex, nor to the messages of environmental quality, citizen security, social peace and healthy life that surround to the urban belief on the form of rural life, nor either to those processes that Esparcia (2003) denominates as of deconcentration and relocation of urban industrial activities with initially urban location. Also one detects a fortification of the local specialization of agriculture towards productions of greater added value and an increasing importance of the postproductive agriculture that generates environmental externalities and creates and guarantees the maintenance of the traditional cultural landscapes. Also, it is notable the economic importance of the activities of conservation and restoration of the nature and of valuation of the rural heritage. We must not forget the opportunities for many rural sites well located and communicated, the opportunities linked to the perception of the concept of rural as a suitable area for the location of companies with marketing strategies focused on the protection and sustainability of the collection and processing of raw materials. However, the socioeconomic condition average in the rural municipalities continues being below the average of the system.

On the demographic and social dynamism, the tendency to demographic revitalitation, although recent, is perceivable in almost 50% of the rural space and to it is added the rupture in the declining propensity in another 20 or 25%. It is linked to the return of old emigrants and the massive arrival of foreign immigrants and some neorural ones. It interests to emphasize that the tendency does not imply an alteration of the propensity of almost all the rural spaces to present negative values in the variations of the population potentials, nor so during the period 2001-2005; that means, as Calvo and Pueyo (dirs, 2008) indicate, that in relative terms it continues existing a differential between the main nodes of the urban system, which have the highest gains, and most part the rural territory, where the local population increase, although it can be significant in percentage terms, in absolute numbers is irrelevant.

Either we must forget that, at least, in 25% of the rural territory the demographic tendencies, as much the structural ones as the recent ones, continue causing a reduction and biological deterioration of the human group. Therefore the most negative side of the demographic scene will stem from the almost inevitable abandonment of a part of the rural territory as the scope of permanent settlement and the consequent resetting of the system of establishments (Rubio and Guillén, 2007). The new times bring new needs, different costs of opportunity and anticipate the modification of the general intention of the system.

With respect to the gains in rural-urban complementarity, they are the corollary of the designed relations countryside-city during the preceding stage, of the progression and improvement of the communication channels and the assumption of the basic principle which says that the rural and the urban need each other for their development; from it derives that the functions and structures of each are combined with those of the other, the vitality of a category depends on the one on the other, because they are not antagonistic, and the resources provided by one of them should take a decisive part in the standard of living of those citizens that belong to the other one. A good example of it, can be found in the amplitude that corresponds to the calculated river basins of life from the tie population; in all the northern half of the country, where indeed, the initial crisis was more serious in this area the rural values are really superior to the urban ones and the Spanish. The vitality of the rural river basins of life is a symptom of functional revitalisation, although, it is derived from an entailment because of second residence rather than because of work and/or principal residence; the relations seem to be inversely proportional: the first one affects more to the small municipalities, while the second and third become explicit in the intervals, those that develop to functions of head or subhead local and count on the highest rates of extraagrarian economic dynamism.

On synthesis, the modelling of the changes experienced by the rural Spanish system is based on a sequence with origin in a classic rurality characterized by the «traditional agrarianism», that has given transit to a «agrarianism of market», to a «pluriactivity rurality» and, finally, to a «multifunctional rurality». From it the existence of three phases in the evolutionary chain derives. The positive entropy explains the first stage, the one of structural crisis. The changes in the configuration and the increase in the permeability of the interactions between the rural system and the urban surroundings appear in the origin of the answers developed during the second stage, the one of functional reconfiguration and involution of the multi-activity; the improvement in the combined operation of the homeostatic and morphogenetic mechanisms that feed the beginning of a new rurality is really outstanding. In third place, up to now little more than drawn in its masterful lines, it is perceived the advance towards a state different to the state of that rurality that extended until the Eighties. This is the origin of the expression «reinvention of the rurality» that we propose.

