

YOUNG PEOPLE BETWEEN THE RURAL AND THE URBAN: THE CASE OF THE AGROBOYS AND AGROGIRLS IN BELA VISTA DE GOIÁS

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Abstract

The text undertakes an analysis of young people in their rural contexts from the perspective of understanding how this social group, whether of urban or rural origin, experiences the cultural aspects of the rural universe in Bela Vista de Goiás, a town with an agricultural-based economy. The young people studied are characterized, due to their modernized way of dressing, as “agroboys” and “agrogirls”, having been influenced by the North American country and western style, by agribusiness and by the Brazilian cultural industry, thereby evidencing their existence between the rural-urban and the countryside-city. Certain conceptions of the studied group, all high school students, were identified, regarding the countryside and the city, their relationship with work, their origins, leisure practices and professional perspectives. It was concluded that these young people are living the logic of modernity and the ideal of a globalized world, with a predominant denial of the peasant project, which is linked to representations of the caipira – a yokel, of being backward, and to the production of a modernized way of living the rural.

Keywords

Youth; Rural; Bela Vista de Goiás; Agrobey/Agrogirl.

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Resumo

O texto faz uma análise de jovens em seus contextos de ruralidade na perspectiva de compreender como esse grupo social, seja de origem urbana, seja rural, vivencia os aspectos culturais do universo rural em Bela Vista de Goiás, uma cidade de base econômica agrícola. A juventude estudada é caracterizada, com base em sua roupagem modernizante, como agrobóys e agrogirls por ser influenciada pelo country estadunidense, pelo agronegócio e pela indústria cultural brasileira, evidenciando sua existência entre o rural-urbano e entre campo-cidade. Foram identificadas algumas concepções do grupo estudado, estudantes do Ensino Médio, sobre o campo e a cidade, a relação com o trabalho, suas origens, práticas de lazer e perspectivas profissionais. Concluiu-se que esses jovens vivem a lógica da modernidade e o ideal de mundo globalizado, com predomínio da negação do projeto de camponês, que é atrelado às representações do caipira e atrasado, e a produção de uma forma modernizante da vivência do rural.

Palavras-chave

Juventude; Rural; Bela Vista de Goiás; Agrobóys/Agrogirl.

YOUNG PEOPLE BETWEEN THE RURAL AND THE URBAN: THE CASE OF THE *AGROBOYS* AND *AGROGIRLS* IN BELA VISTA DE GOIÁS¹

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Introduction

This article addresses contemporary youth, particularly in the context of rurality. Bela Vista de Goiás is a town with a population of 28,077, 4,223 of whom are aged between 15 and 24, according to data from the 2016 Census by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). The article seeks to understand the manner in which young people in this town, who belong to a youth culture (PAIS, 1993)² known as “agroboys” and “agrogirls”, experience and represent the rural and the urban. The general objective is to discuss how these subjects conceive the current culture within the molds of countryside and city, determining the manner in which they integrate and interact within these spaces that, more than the urban or the rural, represent a countryside-city duality. Thus, the analysis seeks to understand the dynamics constructed by these young people in the state of Goiás, based on the constructions of their hybrid identity (HALL, 2000)³, especially with regard to urban-rural conceptions.

1. Translator’s note: “Agro” is related to agriculture, as in “agro-industry”, and although the official language of Brazil is Portuguese, these young people use the English terms “boys” and “girls”.

2. Youth cultures are understood as the “social practices” of young people “within the rhythms of everyday life”. “Youth cultures, broadly speaking, may be understood as a system of values socially attributed to youth (taken as a group referring to a phase of life), i.e., values to which young people from different social backgrounds and conditions will adhere” (PAIS, 1993, p. 69).

3. This is a combination of heterogeneous cultural elements, which enables the constitution of a new synthesis (HALL, 2000).

Youth is a social category constructed through multiple social representations and interpretations. Thus, it is a concept that surpasses biological and age definitions, and should be analyzed “[...] concurrently, [as] a phase of life, a renovating social force and a style of existence”⁴ (FORACCHI, 1972, p. 302). In addition to this, Groppo’s approach (2000) is also included, which understands it as a “link” and “transition” from the juvenile phase through to adulthood. It is understood, therefore, that contemporary youth is diverse and directly influenced by the historical-social conditions into which they have been inserted (NOVAES, 2000). It is a result of the economic, historical and social relations of which they are a part and, particularly in the studied context of the state of Goiás, take into account both the symbolic dimension and the factual and material aspects on which the social production of youth is built.

The text focuses its analysis on high school students at the Pedro Vieira Januário State School, in the town of Bela Vista de Goiás, all of whom study full time. All the 165 high school students enrolled in this school during 2018 were interviewed. This institution was selected due to the fact that it is the only high school in the town with a full-time modality, which significantly alters the relationship of the interviewees both with the school and with the urban area of - the municipality.⁵ In general terms, these young people live the rhythm of a country town, but which, in view of its proximity to Goiânia (45 km), the capital of the state of Goiás, presents cultural dynamics that merge rurality and urbanity. This municipality is economically developed on strong agrarian bases, which thereby contributes to the formation of the identity of these subjects.

The methodological path followed for developing this work was survey research (FONSECA, 2002)⁶, specifically by applying a questionnaire, and through participant observation, conducted by one of the researchers, a co-author of the article, who is a secondary school teacher in Bela Vista de Goiás. The young people studied, for a comparative and distinctive effect, were divided into two groups: those who at a first moment were called urban, because they live in the town, and those termed rural, who live in the countryside and travel into town every

4. This and all non-English citations hereafter have been translated by the authors.

5. According to IBGE data, in 2018, 967 young people were enrolled in high schools in Bela Vista de Goiás, in both public and private schools. The municipality has two public and three private schools that offer this level of education. This signifies that the research presented herein contained answers from 17% of the total number of students enrolled in secondary education in the municipality of Bela Vista de Goiás and 100% of those enrolled in the school with the full-time modality.

6. Survey research may be defined as follows: “obtaining data or information about the characteristics or opinions of a certain group of people, indicated as representative of a target population, using a questionnaire as a research tool” (FONSECA, 2002, p. 33).

day in order to go to school. The questions contained in the questionnaires were related to the social realities of each group: their relationship with work, their origins (countryside-city), family, leisure practices and their professional future. The aim of the questionnaire, applied by one of the authors over a four-day period, under the supervision of the school's pedagogical coordinator, was to grasp the representations and imagery that young people bring to the contemporary rural universe.

Certain questions guided the study: what are the constructions of these young people with regard to family farming and agribusiness? What is the profile of those who live the urban and rural within the same spatiality? Do they represent a new typology of "modern" young people from Goiás, who "deny" the *caipira* (the yokel) tradition of Goiás? Which items influence the construction of the identity of young people who are both rural and urban at the same time?

1. Modern rural youth

Differentiating and distinguishing between rural and urban constitutes a challenge in different parts of the world, since "many countries consider locations below a certain population level as being rural" (ABRAMOVAY, 2000, p. 5). Indeed, theoretical definitions provide the necessary elements for the empirical forms of delimiting space with regards to rural and urban characteristics. Some fundamental dimensions for distinguishing between rural and urban are evident, namely: demographics, economic development, and ways of life. The perspective of territoriality also has a methodological and operational dimension, both in the field of rural development policies and in the new forms of delimiting between rural and urban. In the Brazilian case, according to the official rule of IBGE, the rural space encompasses areas outside the legally defined urban perimeter.

However, the need emerges to define the rural and the urban from a different perspective, other than that which is purely demographic, despite recognizing the practicality offered by this criterion, since there are many inaccuracies that constitute enormous challenges for researchers on this theme, starting with differentiating between the practices that are exclusively from the rural world and those from the urban world. The concepts of rural and urban have been debated by academics and public policy development agencies, concerned with rethinking the very concept of rurality in contemporary times based on the singularities of the Brazilian context (MIRANDA; SILVA, 2013).

It is understood that rather than restricting the analysis to a rural/urban classification, it is more important to understand the relationships, that are established between the subjects of the spatialities, to identify the elements presents in the space intended for analysis. It is also necessary to consider that

every reality is endowed with a dynamism that may cause concepts to become outdated and obsolete. Thus, understanding the movement of reality in a historical perspective must be a priority in relation to the strict definition of what is rural and what is urban, since “the country and the city are changing historical realities, both in themselves and in their interrelations”⁷ (WILLIAMS, 1989, p. 387). Thus, the key to understanding the theme in this article is to characterize the rural youth linked to the culture of agrobos and agrogirls.

In this perspective, recognizing the rural must be based on the conception that it cannot be defined through opposition, but rather on its relationship with cities and towns, hence the constant need to pay attention to maintaining its specificities. Emphasis on the particularities and singularities that mark both the rural and the urban is verified in the studies by João Rua (2005), who presented a more integrative vision anchored in a more territorial approach, i.e., based on the territorialities in which the urban and the rural merge. According to Rua, the identity of the contemporary rural may be understood by basing it on the consideration of a series of “mixtures”, since the rural of today is no longer the “plentiful” rural from some decades. The incorporation of “urbanities”, understood as the manifestation of urban elements in the countryside, produces an interaction that gives rise to unique territorialities, which still need to be defined and, more importantly, understood.

However, the rural continues to be seen as a symbol of backwardness and of lacking culture, despite being increasingly inserted into the context of modernity. On the other hand, for many, the urban represents the peak of civilization, and - arising from enlightening ideals and still very present in part of the production in the humanities - supported by an essentialist and unidirectional notion of culture. This leads to the idea that there is a single cultural path, the beginning and end points of which are, respectively, cultures considered “primitive” and cultures considered “civilized”.

Therefore, it should be noted that the urban-rural contrast extends far beyond a differentiation between city and countryside, and that these cannot be identified as dichotomous, since the modernization of society has engendered profound transformations and have not only narrowed but intensified the established social relations between them. Therefore, the need should be highlighted for the urban and the rural to be viewed as interdependent and complementary, at the points where they merge, thereby forming a hybrid.

7. N.B. For direct citations, the English version was used of WILLIAMS, R. *The Country and the City*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 301.

This configuration influences the very identity of individuals, conceived from cultural systems. Thus, identity would be a concept considered in relation to the sense of belonging to realities and to a set of shared meanings (HALL, 2000). In this perspective, identity is understood as something culturally formed, a positioning and not an essence, linked to the discussion of cultural and national identities and to those that are formed by the changeable, continuous meanings of the subject's everyday life (HALL, 1996).

Hall's perspective (2000) contributes to understanding the young people studied in this work, who may be considered postmodern subjects – i.e., they are fragmented individuals and possess several contradictory or unresolved identities, which implies that the subject assumes different identities at different times. These young people no longer have a fixed identity, depending on whether they are in the context of a rural area or an urban area. Thus, to the extent that changes also occur in the rural area, where the systems of signification and cultural representation are multiplied, rural youths are faced with many identities, which they are able to assume, thereby becoming individuals neither centered only on their inner “self”, nor formed exclusively by their relationship with other identities. It is a mixture of identities, and, at certain moments, young people privilege one of them and, in others, they favor others (PREDIGER, 2009).

It is within this register that the configuration of the young people from Bela Vista de Goiás, state school students in the full-time module, is presented, with a research based on the figures of agrobos and agrogirls. It should be emphasized that several stereotypes, stigmas and prejudices permeate the characterization of rural young people in contemporary Brazil, which leads on to several issues, such as their permanence in the countryside and the search for a future without having pejorative adjectives being attributed to them, such as *caipiras* and *roceiros* (hicks), as synonyms of “backwardness”. Faced with this reality, there has been a new social construction of *caipira* youth regarding the cultural aspects of the pattern of countryside behavior, which has led them towards experiencing a way of being and identifying themselves as agrobos/agrogirl.

Initially, it is considered that the state of Goiás, in its economic and social history, presents aspects related to agriculture and livestock farming, which refers to a way of life based on rurality. Such cultural aspects are sometimes experienced in urban contexts. Thus, it is understood that these young people, both rural and urban from Goiás, are marked by characteristic customs, sometimes shared through music, clothing and language. But it should also be taken into account that, with the reformulation of the social aspects and the new economic dependence resulting from the industrialization process in Brazil, changes have occurred in the economic, social and cultural spectrum of traditional *caipira* life. This view is the

result of an industrialization process that has culminated in appreciating foreign standards, such as country and western, to be found, for example, in a style of local music that has come to be known as *sertanejo universitário* (university country and western), widely consumed in the state of Goiás.

Thus, together with the fragmentation of the individual, which also enables the subjects to be recomposed in hybrid compositions that resignify and link classic and modern forms, the rural identity is taking on new traits: the *caipira* has gained a new status: the cowboy reveals himself as that subject who flaunts his possessions, who has received schooling, who does not feel inferior, who is free, rough and ready, and who risks his life in search of freedom (SETUBAL, 2005). This *caipira* arrived in the city in other forms; he began to accommodate himself to different cultural patterns, which refer to a logic of modernization. However, according to Antonio Candido (2010), the modern aspects did not replace the traditional, since there was an adjustment process between these values.

It is essential to consider, therefore, that the contemporary rural is a culture similar to any other culture that has been transformed, which has developed ways of being and doing things that are no longer strictly linked to the official and unofficial activities in the countryside; that has resisted the disappearance of the rural by believing in traditions and the urbanized way of living; that maintains different forms of negotiating with the products of mass culture and with the dominant urban culture, capable of changing positions, organizing experiences and making other meanings emerge in the face of its new condition. Hence, the notion that must be emphasized is that the rural is always being built in a constant relationship with the dominant and hegemonic cultures, with the urban world (the municipal headquarters, the capital of the state, the nearby medium-sized or big cities, etc.), without abandoning, however, rural characteristics, but giving them a new meaning.

It is understood, therefore, that the rural has been resignified within society based on official traditions (dance, song, typical food, handicrafts), in the images of these traditions and their reworkings in the products of mass culture (in music, clothing, advertising, cinema etc.). In other words, the rural is always “relational”, i.e., it maintains relations with the urban and with the influences of the dominant culture and mass communication.

Thus, in a dispute of a narrative, hegemonic construction, a perception of the rural has been reconstructed, and is no longer linked to rusticity, backwardness and simplicity, to symbols such as the *caipira* or the *roceiro*. The new rurality has been endorsed through the aesthetics of agrobaby and agogirl, adorned with symbols of power, of capital and of distinction triumphing over a negatively stereotyped image of the rural.

There are several concepts and terminologies that provide theoretical support for discussions on youth and their patterns of sociability and construction of identity in a globalized society. However, it is considered that the subjects of this research comprise what may be called youth cultures (PAIS, 1993). Indeed, our intention is to analyze the cultural and symbolic representations of young people on experiencing and sharing identifiable values - with the culture of agrobos and agogirls.

The use of the terminology *agro* defines the connection of the subjects to the rural world, with the use of the foreign terms *boy* and *girl* in reference to North American culture, as also occurs with the use of the terms *country* and *cowboy*. It is important to state that there is no intention to bias the research towards the male sex, with a focus restricted onto agrobos. However, in view of the social construction regarding the male presence in rural contexts, at various moments the debate has been directed towards young males.

Within this context, although associated with backwardness and to being characterized as *roceiro*, the representative of the male sex set in rurality is understood as a stereotyped *sertanejo* (country person) version of the “macho man”, a strong, virile male who represents the relationship of economic power permeated with bourgeois values. Masculinity becomes essential in order to construct this cultural identity, within a constitution whereby there is little space for the feminine, so much so that they are often stereotyped as “macho women”. Thus, in the context of rurality, there is a social construction that emphasizes belonging to the male universe.

In an idealized perspective, the agrobos is precisely that man, young and rich, born and raised on large rural properties and dedicated to a life of pleasure and recreation. These are “the new *caipiras*”, who take on a manner of “dress” inspired by the North American country and western style, a stereotyped representation that reinforces the duality between backwardness and modernity.

When discussing the cultural constructions of this group, it is essential to establish a correlation with music, a vehicle of information that brings with it all the transformations made effective by the industry that commercializes it. It is evident that above all, contemporary youth consume music that has become established within the urban environment and has become a product of the cultural industry (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 1985). In this context, Edson Farias (2005, p. 647) reported how “[...] leisure and entertainment have interfered on the level of values - and expressions, thereby bringing about effects on the resignification of domains of memory”. According to Ortiz (2006), it is possible to understand the problems surrounding the relationship between economics and culture in the contemporary world. The author’s notion of “modernity-world” may be useful for analyzing the issues related to the identity of cultural diversity.

Country music, however, is understood as a product of the cultural industry. Before examining this question, it is necessary to distinguish *caipira* music and country music. The first, more expressive in the Southeast and Midwest of the country, presents fundamental characteristics that differentiate it from country music. In its emerging context, *caipira* music was not only limited to the question of music itself; it was integrated into the entire *caipira* culture, by being related to leisure, everyday and religious activities, and acting as integrating element of the community into which it was inserted. Furthermore, it supported the common imagery of the inhabitants of the same region, contributing to the social and cultural maintenance of the community. Thus, *caipira* music may be understood as a cultural expression that is integrated into the context of the subject within the rural area or in the countryside. In general, its themes are linked to religion, leisure, ways of working and sociability in the everyday life of country folk.

Country music, on the other hand, is characterized by assimilating aspects of *caipira* culture in a format intended for the market and by transforming what is typical of rural content into the urban. This may be perceived in the singing duos who represent the previously mentioned sertanejo universitário, a musical style, which is consumed all over the country. This consolidation has taken on greater proportions with the emergence of country duos, who sell a new way of seeing the *caipira*, added to which are state-of-the-art instruments that provide more elaborate arrangements to the songs, as well as introducing the influence of North American cowboys, with regard to the clothes they wear.

Hence, the country style has incorporated characteristics of the cultural industry and, over the decades, due to the popularity achieved and the aggregation of new rhythms and techniques, has become the first most consumed mass genre in the country. In this conjuncture between *caipira* music and country music, the genre of sertanejo universitário has emerged. This musical style, which emerged in mid-1992, highlights the reality of contemporary youth: parties, alcoholic beverages, sex symbols and money. Coming from the universities, the young people, who enjoyed the country style that had prevailed until that moment, then introduced a new “outfit” to the entire country universe.

Representations of this new genre encouraged certain behaviors and placed emphasis onto money and to indicators of wealth and consumption. It is common, for example, for these compositions to give prominence to the car as being a central element in conquering women. In other words, in these lyrics, in which the car is seen as a sign of wealth and power, sexual conquests are presented as a result of social ascension, symbolized by powerful cars, designer clothes and a lifestyle

based on displaying consumer goods. These compositions have even received the nickname of “ostentatious country music”.⁸

Therefore, it is understood that agroyoung people and agroyoung girls are contemporary young people who live out the cultural dynamics of urbanity and rurality, but in the context of the cultural industry, predominantly influenced by *sertaneja universitária* music and by the standards that it directly or indirectly incites. Based on a pattern of sociability experienced in the cities, these young people redefine the representations of traditional *caipira* people, thus forming a new generation of rural individuals who are “modern” and educated and who dress according to fashion and are bedazzled by the economic power linked to agribusiness.

2. The Youth of Bela Vista de Goiás

The municipality of Bela Vista de Goiás, 45 km from the state capital of Goiás, is considered part of the metropolitan region of Goiânia. Located in the Midwest region of the country, it has a population of approximately 28,077 (IBGE, 2016). According to the local narrative, the city emerged close to the mining centers, when drovers and trackers, who transported goods from the state of Minas Gerais to Goiás, established the place as their resting point and a “drovers ranch”. This was how the settlement came into being, which later, on June 5, 1896, was raised to the category of municipality.

Rural activities have always been the economic base of the municipality. For a long time, the main activity was the cultivation and processing of tobacco – which in fact was the main export product for decades. However, from 1980, agriculture and livestock began to rank prominently across the region, which some years later, led Bela Vista de Goiás to be classified as the second largest dairy basin in the state.

Currently, while a large number of landowners are engaged in agricultural activities, it is important to mention the economic influence of certain industries within the municipality. It is one of the largest dairy cattle breeders in the state, and there are three dairy establishments, two reception and cooling posts and a dairy with a pasteurization plant. Poultry farming, in addition to generating the largest source of jobs, helps to strengthen the market and the flow of corn, soy and sorghum production.

The subjects of this research, students from the Pedro Vieira Januário State School, in Bela Vista de Goiás, are young people who live urban practices,

8. There are many reports on the style. One of them is “Country singers that have burst onto the scene singing songs about cars”, São Paulo, Rede TV, October 5, 2015. Celebrities section. Available at: <https://www.redetv.uol.com.br/tvfama/blog/celebridades/sertanejos-que-estouraram-cantando-musicas-sobre-carros>. Viewed on: December 10, 2020.

but who are charged with cultural traits that connect them to the rural world. Thus, by examining the issues that permeate their reality, their leisure practices, professional desires, origins (countryside-city) and whether they may remain in the city or possibly migrate to the countryside, we seek to visualize the cultural dynamics that they experience and at the same time, resignify. These are young people who all belong to a similar social class, since they are amongst the least favored groups in the municipality, even if they assume the characteristics of the agroboy/agrogirl culture.

The first distinction concerns identifying the number of young people who live in rural areas, those who travel daily to school and those who live in the urban area. Thus, data were collected in two groups of subjects: rural students (residing in rural areas) and urban students. This division was also made regarding the application of the questionnaires, since 68% of them live in the urban area and 32% in the rural area. The questionnaires for the rural young people contained approaches related to their reality in the countryside, their relationship with work and family, their cultural practices, leisure concepts, their future professional perspectives and to their relationship with the city. The questionnaires applied to the urban young people, although following the same approach, sought the opposite direction: the relationship of these young people with the countryside, with the rural universe. Thus, the guiding questions also aimed to understand the relationships they maintained with work and with the family, their cultural practices and leisure concepts, the perspective of their professional futures and, particularly, their relationship with the rural, experiencing it both in the rural space, or in the urban context. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that there were similarities in the responses to the questionnaire from the two groups.

It is necessary to consider that the issues of youth, from a Bourdieusian perspective, are understood as a set of structural and structured meanings, both elaborated and incorporated by these young people. These issues help us to understand the sense of the youth category, consequently we should not lose sight of the discussions on their conceptions regarding work, family, leisure, education and the future. Rural youth is also a product of the city, since it is not isolated from the world, especially after Brazil's accelerated urbanization process.

With regards to the topic of work, it was identified that the vast majority of students surveyed did not work. The conception of work, according to Marx (1996), is related to the workforce that these young people "sell" in exchange for a salary. However, the information obtained does not reveal the formality/informality of the activities they perform or the precariousness of the work and their salaries. Thus, workers are considered as those who declare themselves as such and

who, supposedly, are remunerated. However, for the debate on rural youth, it is important to highlight that precariousness and informality are a recurring part of the life of young people in the countryside. They work for little or no income, and most often on an informal basis.

The research considered the time that students dedicated to work. Most of the students living in rural areas, 79%, declared that they did not work, i.e., these students dedicated their time exclusively to activities and the educational environment. Those who stated that they worked represented 21%, and were those who, in addition to remaining at school all day long, still performed some activity when they were outside the school environment. In relation to young people living in the urban area, only 6% stated that they worked, and thus, 94% undertook no work activity, devoting their time entirely to school activities. The comparative analysis demonstrates that the number of rural youth working is greater than that of urban youth. Indeed, it is clear that young people in the rural area have a greater relationship with work when compared to those in the urban area.

Evidently, most of these young people do not work because they study full time. Although there is a smaller percentage of young people working in both groups, rural and urban, it is important to highlight the need for monitoring in relation to the teaching-learning process. They only rely on the night period to dedicate themselves to out-of-class studies and still have to share it with work. Thus, with such a demanding schedule, they may develop learning difficulties.

Indeed, different situations are visualized. There is a representative group in the sample that does not need to be concerned with maintaining themselves financially, because this group is maintained by family members. There is another portion however, which, through their own salaries, complements the family income and/or maintains its consumption. Hence, based on the interpretation of the authors, these data emphasize that, even in the labor market, education is currently of extreme importance for young people and their families, since it is a means of obtaining knowledge in order to construct a professional future capable of guaranteeing subsistence and providing quality of life and self-fulfillment.

In terms of young people who live in rural areas, and their participation in agricultural activities, the survey identified that 65% declared that they did not participate in any productive process, and did not involve themselves in any agricultural activities. Thus, 35% declared that they did. It should be remembered that the number of students in the countryside who stated that they worked was 21%. It is interesting to question what this group understands by work, since countryside activities are not being considered as such. In other words, it is understood that work is only that which generates income.

Therefore, it may be concluded that they view work as a paid activity, which is able to guarantee financial independence, so the actions of “helping” or “participating” in domestic or agricultural activities does not place them in the situation of workers. As a result, these young people understand work as the activities that they themselves develop, such as heads of the rural establishment, because they take on the management, buy materials and sell products, in addition to, generally knowing the conditions of production and market (MENASCHE et al., 1996; ABRAMO, 2007; BRUMER, 2007).

Within this context, the future of young people and the future of agriculture are questioned regarding the hypothesis that, although living in rural areas, they opt for other activities and a different perspective on life instead of those related to rurality in space; and, conversely, those who, living in an urban environment, choose activities or a different way of life other than those experienced in the city.

Before investigating what it is that makes young people stay in the countryside, or not, it is necessary to understand the reasons why they migrate. According to Weisheimer (2013, p. 22): “[...] statistics from migratory processes have demonstrated that the rural exodus, over recent decades, has mainly involved young people”. Therefore, it is worth reflecting on the comfort that young people enjoy at home, as well as on their access to social networks, internet etc., and the organization of cultural events by the members of the community in which they live. Therefore, both for those who would like to migrate and for those who would like to stay in the countryside, having access to the best of both worlds has been a desire and a demand. Access to goods and services produced and available in Brazilian society is also, according to Wanderley (2009), desired by young people living in rural areas.

Historically, it may be stated that migration in Brazil has occurred as a result of having to leave the land due to a lack of conditions for survival, much more than the attraction exerted by cities and towns. In this case, the rural exodus does not signify displeasure with the place of origin, but rather the search for a better way of life. For this reason, the major interest should be in what motivates them to stay, and not in what drives them away. It is essential to analyze whether rural youth wants to leave and, at the same time, discover whether they like living in the countryside, so that migration does not perpetuate the mistaken image of rejecting this space (MENEZES, 2012). Thus, the relationship between “liking the countryside” and “not wanting to live in the city” is perpetuated and, on the other hand, between “not liking the countryside” and “wishing to live in the city”.

With regard to the imagery of rural youth concerning migration to the city, the following figures were discovered: for 65%, migrating to the city was not

unimaginable; while, for the remaining 35%, the desire to remain in the countryside persisted. There may be multiple “expulsion factors” and “attraction factors” that directly influence the reality and, consequently, the imagery of each one.

It is important to note that young people who aspire to migrate, represented by the majority, threaten family succession, which thereby generates the probability of draining the rural area in the near future. When examining this process in which rural youth takes the perspective of not staying in the countryside, several motivations for this behavior may be indicated, such as the low income expectations in peasant agriculture, and the search for better infrastructure, services and leisure options (REDIN; SILVEIRA, 2012).

One of the reasons for the departure of young people from the countryside to the city is due to their search for the “modern”, which hence characterizes the view of the rural as being backward or primitive, encouraging young people in this environment to enter the “molds” of urban youth (“Modern”) so as not to be seen in this manner (MATOS, 2002). For this, they often seek to appropriate new technologies and academic knowledge. Thus, migration amongst young peasants “may be assessed as a denial of the peasant project” (RENK, 1999, p. 43).

With regard to migration towards rural areas, in the imagery of young people living in urban areas, the research demonstrates that for the majority, 66%, this possibility is far from occurring, since they declared that they had never wished to live in rural areas. However, 34% expressed this desire. Questions such as this provide a reflection on the “attractive” and “unattractive” aspects of the countryside indicated by Brumer (2007), which sometimes influence the imagery of young people with a different reality regarding the possibility of someday living far from the city, or not.

In addition, the historical lack of efficient public policies for young people in Brazil, the difficulty and insufficiency of good quality health and education services, as well as limited access to leisure, have reduced the willingness of young people to stay in the rural area. Lack of support for the creation of alternative work and diversified means for the composition of income further increases the tendency for young people to leave the countryside. They are even frequently encouraged to do so by their own parents, who believe that in the city their children will have better opportunities to make their dreams come true (SILVA et al., 2006). Added to this is the idea that the city is “modern” and a place of “civilization”, while the countryside is a place of “backwardness”, of “*roceiros*” and “*caipiras*”.

To discuss the succession process in the countryside, the accumulation process of capital in the Brazilian countryside should also be considered, since currently the objective possibilities of forming new family production units are

markedly scarce due to the expansion of capital in the countryside, which to some extent has driven young people away from this environment. For this reason, the questions put forward by rural youth take on the understanding of a double social dynamic. On the one hand, there are territorial dynamics, which relate the home (family), the neighborhood (the local community) and the city (the urban-industrial world). This fundamentally concerns the living spaces that are intertwined and that give substance to the experience of rural youth and its insertion into society. On the other hand, everyday life and expectations for the future are constituted by a temporal dynamic: the past of family traditions, which inspires the practices and strategies of the present and the direction of the future, the present of everyday life, focused on education, work and local sociability; and the future that is projected through inheritance, succession and temporary or permanent migration strategies (CARNEIRO; CASTRO, 2007).

Thus, social relationships are built in the present, driven by family and local traditions in the past, and guide possible alternatives for the future of generations and to reproducing the family establishment. Such dynamics are connected, and a multifaceted social actor emerges who may carry, concurrently and paradoxically, an ideal of rupture and continuity in the rural world. This reality, to a certain extent, is also present in the most prevalent research, so that, in the analysis of the family trajectory of the young people studied, a history of migration is perceived.

With regards to family origins, a small division is visible between those who belong to a generation of peasants (47%) and those whose parents migrated from the city to the countryside (which surprisingly corresponds to 53%), whether because of economic, work, family or safety-related factors. However, this data opens up the discussion on the issue of rural exodus, since, although there exists a significant portion of this peasant generation, it is an index that has decreased over time, with people migrating to the city. This phenomenon highlights the perspective raised in this article, that the two social fields presented have merged and produced hybrid identities, since the statistical results of the survey research presented herein are not compatible with the data, nor with the national historical-demographic context.

Although many young people were born and raised in the city, their parents are of peasant origin. It was revealed that 62% of young people had parents from the countryside, while the parents of the remaining 38% were from the city. This is a very representative issue, since it concerns the countryside-city migratory process of parents who now live in the city, but also of those who lived in the city and have migrated to the countryside. It is, therefore, a two-way migratory process.

Indeed, it should be considered that communication between the countryside and the city has facilitated access to urban goods and values, but to which must

be added unemployment and the rising levels of urban violence, which have ultimately produced a situation in which city - life has become difficult. It is within this context that the ideals of youth indicate a synthesis, which we have defined as a life project that links the rural and the urban. Opening new alternatives for working in the countryside is a project that arises from the perspective of closer ties with the city, favored by the facilities from the means of communication.

The highest rate of young people in the city who have peasant family members is characterized by 82%, represented by young people who have a family member residing in the countryside. A total of 18% stated that they had no family members in this situation. The number of young people living in the urban area of - the town whose relatives still live in the countryside is somewhat representative, which enables us to affirm that, even living in the city, many young people have a parental relationship with peasants.

One important aspect to understand the young people studied is related to the theme of leisure, a practice in which subjects seek to carry out pleasant activities and individual fulfillment. Leisure times are important for young people, since “[...] spaces for leisure and culture are spaces where young people are able to process their most significant experiences” (SOUZA, 2009, p. 33). For our research subjects, in terms of leisure experiences, young people from the countryside proved to be pretty much divided: 50% represented those for whom leisure activities were mostly practiced in the city, such as going to bars and shows and visiting friends. The other 50%, on the other hand, were represented by young people from the countryside for whom the rural environment is the space where they enjoy most of their leisure. This factor becomes significant since, in much of the literature, one of the main reasons that motivate young people from the countryside to migrate to the city is that rural spaces have little attraction, especially when leisure activities are added to this phenomenon.

For many of the young people who live in the city, the countryside is where they choose to enjoy their leisure time. When questioned on this point, 54% mentioned the countryside as an option, for activities such as horseback riding, fishing and visiting family members on small farms. For 46% of them, the countryside did not present itself as an enjoyable option for their pleasurable activities.

The countryside is related to a natural way of life, of peace, of innocence based on simple virtues (WILLIAMS, 1989). The city, on the other hand, is associated with the idea of a center of achievement, knowledge, communication and electricity. However, a mentality has also been created with negative associations to the terms: the city as a place of noise, worldly life and too much ambition; the countryside as the place of backwardness, of more ignorant people and of limited opportunities.

With this in mind, the countryside is identified as a space for leisure and rest for those who reside in the city. Leisure in rural areas presents a number of possibilities, one of which is to break with routine, whether on the part of rural residents, when leisure distances them from their daily work tasks, or on the part of city dwellers looking for alternative activities to those of the urban environment.

Some young people, even those living in the city, maintain some kind of relationship with the countryside, due to issues related to both work or family and leisure. When asked about the frequency with which they go to the rural environment, the highest rate came from those who rarely visit it, which was 45%. The second highest index was of those who “never” visit this environment, represented by 20%; 18% attend monthly, 15% weekly and 2% daily. With such data, it becomes possible to picture the distance between young people in the city and the countryside. However, they also emphasized the absence of direct contact with the rural environment. There is indirect contact, reinforcing that their experiences and ways of life are built in an urban perspective.

In terms of professional projections, for the subjects in focus, the professional dimension was important and holds a privileged position in the discussion regarding the future. It is through these professional perspectives that young people build their projects. However, it is essential to emphasize that their life paths should not only be limited to professional aspects; it is also necessary to problematize other dimensions of the human condition, such as affective choices, collective projects and the subjective orientations of individual life. Nevertheless, for the empirical construction of this study, the future perspective of young people is taken into account, since we believe it is relevant for the analysis and contemporary discussions on the subject.

It is within this context that schooling, and a professional future are related. Although the importance of school goes beyond its role as a means of facilitating access to the labor market, it is inferred that interest in education is always associated with work, as young people consider school to be essential for obtaining a good job in the future (CHARLOT, 2006). In the context of this research, the same interest was evident, since, for the young people from the Pedro Vieira Januário State School, attending the full-time education module, and based on what was evidenced in the answers to the questionnaires, there is “a strong tendency towards studying, which constitutes a valuable sum of competence, productivity, and economic and social development” (CHARLOT, 2006, p. 233).

This current situation, as suggested by Paul Singer (2005, p. 28), is justified by the fact that these “[...] young people were born into a time of social crisis” and are experiencing a period of increasing unemployment. As a result, there is a fear of

being “a leftover” in the world of work, of being incapable and unable to face the demands of the current world. For Regina Novaes (2007), the aspects of the today’s world, which denote the difference of the condition of youth in relation to previous generations and to social configurations, have an effect on youth and define what it is to be young today, both in the city and in the countryside. In addition, Nilson Weisheimer (2019), when specifically addressing rural youth, highlights the negative representations that mark the professional practices of these young people in the countryside. The author notes that “[...] these young people form a community of common destiny, breaking away from family agricultural work, amongst other factors, because this activity does not guarantee them material autonomy” (WEISHEIMER, 2019, p. 94).

In a synthesis of professional perspectives, there are many activities that young rural students in Bela Vista de Goiás wish to pursue in the future. This question exposes how they are indeed driven to maintain their relations with the countryside or to break with it in some manner. The most expressive indexes are represented by veterinary medicine, which corresponds to 18%, and civil engineering, also with 18%; then comes medicine, 15%, psychology, 9%; visual arts, law and agronomy, 6% each; dentistry, pedagogy, architecture, administration, physiotherapy, 3% each; and 7% did not respond. It is important to note that, in this list, agronomy was only represented by 6%, which leads us to conclude that few rural young people intend to maintain ties with agriculture. Therefore, when indicating veterinary medicine as a future profession, this does not lead us to believe that it is in order to remain rooted in rural activities. This professional choice points more towards the construction of an “agricultural” status linked to urban practices and values.

The confluence between the rural and the urban is evident, with emphasis on the configuration of the new rural to which these young people are submitted. With the increasing integration of these spaces and the “crossing” of the rural by the urban (and vice versa), there is exploration and complementarity between them both and their cultures. As noted, the professional intentions of the young people surveyed confirm the influence of urbanity, in which the rural and the urban appear to merge.

Amongst the urban youth, 16.97% either did not know or did not answer regarding their future projections. It is understood that these subjects are suffering an identity crisis, recurrent in contemporary times and as a result of the globalization process, in which the decentralization of subjectivity is evident. Thus, the index under analysis is related to those who do not know what to expect from the future or their professional and personal perspectives. The second highest representative

index is of those who wish to study “veterinary medicine”, at 13.33%. Since this is the most representative, it speaks volumes regarding the relationship between the city and the countryside, because even though they live in the city, young people are predisposed to exercising activities linked to the rural universe. After this comes medicine, with 12%, and law, with 9%. There is then an immense diversity of professional possibilities, many of them linked to the urban environment, which corresponds to 62% of the answers.

This index brings us back to the discussions raised in this research. Thus, it would appear that the imagery and future professional projections of these young people are conditioned by the pattern of sociability. In effect, these are hybrid subjects who merge rural and urban cultural aspects, but live out the logic of the capitalist world, inserted into a consumer market, which changes their perceptions on work, formal higher education and way of life. Thus, when “choosing” a profession linked to the rural universe (such as veterinary medicine, strongly linked, in this case, to the care of large animals⁹), the mixture of aspects may be perceived in their study and career projects.

In general terms, this data indicates that young people living in the urban area of Bela Vista de Goiás, as well as the rural young people included in this research, nourish a rurality which becomes expressed through the way they dress, their language and cultural practices. Unlike the stigmas and stereotypes of “backwardness”, “*caipiras*” and “*roceiros*”, they bring new significance to what it means to be rural, constructing a figure based on urban life, through maintaining the capitalist system. They are the agroboty and the agroboty that give rise to the status and power that agribusiness offers, that which is perceptible in constructing an identity of a young person from Goiás, especially those that inhabit the small towns, as is the case of the municipality in focus.

These young people oscillate between the rural and the urban and, from within this perspective, the construction of a new identity is underway. According to Carneiro (1998), the bonds that they cultivate still bind them to their culture of origin, while at the same time seeing their self-image reflected in the mirror of urban culture, “modern”, which emerges as a reference for constructing their projects for the future, generally guided by the desire of being inserted into the modern world.

Within the perspective of Carneiro (1998), the construction of this modernizing project may not be seen as originating in the current generation of young people.

9. During the participant observation and in the application of the questionnaires, this was a clarification of the interviewees who marked this answer.

In reality, it is a value that has assumed greater hegemony over recent decades, throughout the modernization process of global society. Young people broke with the reproduction pattern of what could be termed “peasant culture” and are no longer part of their parents’ cultural universe. With the increasing technology and expansion of the urban way of life, new patterns of sociability have emerged and have (re)configured the practices of youth.

It is true that the communication between countryside and city has been intensified and access between urban goods and values facilitated. Accordingly, young people have reconstructed cultural dynamics anchored in a reinterpretation of urban values, in which social roles are redefined and projects are formulated within new paradigms, starting from a (partial) break with the old molds traditionally adopted by the local society.

However, it is necessary to establish that, when considering the rural and urban, there is a reference to well-defined cultural specificities. Both places contain young people with different identities and projects, which reiterates cultural heterogeneity, diluted on the one hand and reaffirmed on the other, by the process of globalization. This prevents us from drawing up homogenizing cross-sections and rigid boundaries between the rural and the urban, and also within each of these poles. Within these cultural universes, antagonistic value systems coexist, and inform the distinct and competitive individual projects.

It is certain that the result of the research does not indicate the conformation of a homogeneous whole. Thus, it is not possible to consider urbanization of the countryside as an expression that qualifies the loss of the specificity of either of these two poles - countryside-city or urban-rural. On the contrary, in “late modernity”, where there is no choice but to decide how to be and how to act (GIDDENS, 1997), the possibility of choice as a rule would be a way of facing the multiplicity of options in everyday life, so that the alternatives of being “rural” in the city and “urban” in the countryside would be open (DE PAULA, 1998).

Therefore, cultural dynamics are reaffirmed, based on definitions and redefinitions of identities no longer supported by the homogeneity of cultural patterns, but on diversity and, primarily, on a specific way of combining practices and values - originating from different cultural universes.

Final considerations

In order to understand the reality of young students in the municipality of Bela Vista de Goiás, in their rural and urban contexts, discussions have been initiated that permeate the understanding of the category of youth so as to arrive at an understanding that young people from a generation have similar behaviors, thoughts and actions, since they are in the same historical process.

This is how they dynamize culture. In the case studied, we have understood the existence of cultural hybridization and interrelationship between urban and rural young people as a result of cultural practices, in which the ways of being and lifestyle have been homogenized. Through the rural-urban dichotomy, it is understood how the young people in the research may be inserted into groups that merge aspects of rural and urban, but which have a strong urban influence, especially due to the media and the absorption of technology. Through this configuration, cultural practices reinterpreted by contemporary young people are presented, in which the *caipira* exits the stage and the agroboy enters, a social representation of modern rural young people who, from a capitalist and urbanized perspective, reconfigure what it means to be from the countryside.

Lastly, it is important to emphasize that the economic bases of the studied municipality are built on rural activities, as is the case of many municipalities in the state of Goiás. The data from the field research reveal an interpretation of the cultural dynamics of rural and urban young people who, under similar situations, have “reproduced” the same conditions of existence. In general terms, with regard to both groups, those who live in the urban area and those who live in the rural area of Bela Vista de Goiás do so under the logic of contemporary modernity. As may be observed in the responses to the quantitative research and in the participant observation, “denial” of the peasant project predominates, due to the fact that it is linked to representations of *caipiras*. Thus, the research indicates the growing migration of rural youth towards the city and to the permanence of urban people in the city. Therefore, it is concluded that the young people of Bela Vista de Goiás, in their context of rurality, live the ideal of the globalized world. Influenced by the ideal of agribusiness, in which agriculture and livestock are interwoven in the financial, commercial and industrial capitals, and by country music from the university, these young people assume the culture of agroboy and agrogirl as a way of modernizing the rural perspective.

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