

Vanessa Miriam Carlow,
Institute for Sustainable Urbanism ISU
(Eds.)

RURALISM

The Future of Villages
and Small Towns in an
Urbanizing World

jovis

The Relevance of Thinking Rural! Vanessa Miriam Carlow	6	Questioning the Urban–Rural Dichotomy	25
Photo Essay by The Pk. Odessa Co	10, 272	Ruralism and Periphery: The Concept of Ruralism and Discourses on Ruralism in Denmark Jens Kvorning	26
		Living in a Small Town: An Urban and a Rural Experience at Once Annett Steinführer	40
		Rurality in a Society of Cities Claudia Oltmanns	56
		The Rural as an Autonomous Narrative within the Hierarchy of Global Urbanization or What Kind of Stories Can the Rural Tell within the City? Christiane Sörensen, Wiltrud Simbürger	64
		(R)urban Landscapes. Navigating between the Urban and the Rural Perspective Sigrun Langner	76
		Rural Land(scapes). Lessons to Be Learned (?) Jonna Majgaard Krarup	90
		Networked Urbanism Interview with Belinda Tato, ecosistema urbano, Madrid	107

Ruralism in the European Context	119	Ruralism—A Global Perspective	227
“Landungsprozesse.” Structural Development Policies and Their Effects towards Resilient Urban and Rural Regions Andy Westner	120	Urbanizing Shanghai’s Suburban Farmland Ruta Randelovic	228
Social Innovations in Rural Life Worlds Ralph Richter	140	The Urbanization of Rural Space in Latin America under Pressure from the Exploitation of Nature: The Case Study of Casanare in Colombia Liliana Giraldo Arias	242
The Interrelation of Architecture and Territorial Character in Northern Germany Ines Lüder	148	No Urban Desert! The Emergence and Transformation of Extended Urban Landscapes in Oman Aurel von Richthofen	256
LandLust—The “Knowability” of Post-Pastoral Ruralism Eckart Voigts	162	Hinterland Interview with Stephan Petermann, OMA/AMO, Rotterdam	268
Key Projects: Combining Potentials from Urban Ecologies—A Swedish Perspective Nils Björling	179	Authors	286
Academy of Future Rural Spaces in Lower Saxony Verena Schmidt, Dirk Neumann, Olaf Mumm, Yeon Wha Hong, Marie Bruun Yde, Vanessa Miriam Carlow	191	Picture Credits	292
The Hike to the Snøhetta: Learning from Landscape Interview with Patrick Lüth, Snøhetta, Innsbruck	212	Imprint	295

The Relevance of Thinking Rural!

Vanessa Miriam Carlow

According to the United Nations, two-thirds of the world population will live in urban areas in the near future—that is in cities and urban regions.¹ How will the other third live? This question alone suggests a simplistic dichotomy between urban and rural spaces that no longer exists. Alongside—not opposite—the transformation and drastic expansion of urban regions worldwide, rural space, too, has changed dramatically: after mechanization and industrialization, rural space has experienced mass out-migration of people. On the other hand, being a recreational landscape it temporarily receives a mass immigration of guests. Rural space has received waste and unwanted or outdated infrastructures from cities. It has served as extraction site for natural resources, creating manmade landscapes of an unseen scale. Rural space has seen a revolution in farming and the genetic modification of plants and animals to feed the world's population. Its water dams, wind farms, cornfields, and solar parks are producing energy at an unprecedented scale. In light of this recent massive change, why are rural spaces often dismissed as declining or stagnating?

Throughout the last decades, the attention of architecture and planning has shifted to be more or less exclusively concerned with the city. Where villages and small towns have not been on the agenda, the city-centered discourse becomes almost a self-fulfilling prophecy with cities becoming larger and better, more interesting and beautiful, whereas villages and small towns are more or less left to their own devices. Few forward-looking strategies for developing villages and small towns exist—even though there are ample methods for how to manage their shrinkage. In contrast with shrinkage, there are

many rural regions, villages, and small towns, which can prosper from establishing a good working economy in a rural network.

And alongside the cities, the grand societal challenges also leave their footprint in rural areas: climate change, resource shortage, the diversification of the population, the need to be more resilient, or the question of how to organize sustainable mobility and civic participation—not least of which is the question of identity. Rural areas and their landscapes oftentimes serve as a medium of collective identity and culture for entire regions—representing an image of *Heimat* and the longing for a wholesome world. Which strategies fit the needs of villages and small towns?

The #3 ISU Talks, held in November 2015 at TU Braunschweig, aimed at a discussion of the “Future of Villages and Small Towns in an Urbanizing World.” Along with the following questions, researchers from different fields including urban and landscape planning, architecture, geography, and social and cultural sciences discussed the future of rural spaces: How and with what human consequences are rural spaces being urbanized today? What are the existing and potential connections between urban and rural spaces? What new concepts for rural living are there? Do we need to formulate a (new) vision for ‘ruralism’? And what role can ‘urban design,’ architecture, and planning play in preparing rural life and space for the future? Which vocabulary do architects and planners, anthropologists, and natural scientists have to describe that massive change? Which strategies are employed to guide the development in space described as rural?

This book combines different disciplinary perspectives on the rural realm.

The articles are centered around three core themes.

The first chapter looks at landscape as a defining element and physical representation of the rural. Some authors argue that the rural is in fact not disappearing, but rather being absorbed to the city to form strongholds there in terms of landscape and also cultural practices related to landscapes, like urban gardening.

The second chapter discusses ruralism and concepts for rural areas in European countries and regions from Austria, Sweden, Bavaria, Lower Saxony, and the North of Germany.

The third chapter looks at urbanization processes in fast-growing countries of the Middle East and Global South, as well as China, where the rural is under heavy pressure to disappear in favor of suburban, low-density development.

Interviews round off each chapter.

A photo essay by The Pk. Odessa Co of Lower Saxony taken in five of ISU’s partner municipalities provides a great introduction to this book.

A Rural State of Emergency

The urgency with which villages and small towns are searching for a liveable future in an urbanizing world was revealed during the “Academy of Future Rural Spaces” that the Institute for Sustainable Urbanism (ISU) launched in 2015 following an open call by our institute. With “Have Space. Want Ideas? Not afraid of students’ ideas?” we introduced ISU as a young collaborative team