

Essay

Challenges and Pathways in Sustainable Rural Resiliencies or/and Resistances

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Abstract: The concept of ‘sustainable rural resiliencies’ has an umbrella consideration for multiple situations. Against the main stream of rural geographical literature, the concept of resistance associated with the concept of resilience is used. The concept of resistance is linked with processes of social and spatial tensions and change in the rural community, while the concept of resilience is linked to periods of relative stability in the place at different scales. But, little research uses resistance and resilience as a spatial-time process in a complementary way. In this contribution we use resistance and resilience in this perspective, with socio-spatial manifestations at global, national, regional, and local levels, in form of four scalar spheres and styles of complementarity: resilience model of stability, mix model bottom up, mix model from above and resistance model associated with tensions.

Keywords: resistance; rural; local; global; resiliencies; spatial processes; rural geography

1. Introduction

The process of urbanization is a planetary phenomenon. But in this context in many parts of the world there is a re-emergence of less populated areas, as spaces to live and work, in a pleasant spatial context for human development at a collective and individual level. These re-emergence processes can have multiple dimensions: social, environmental, economic, and legal among others [1]. These processes of resurgence of depopulated rural spaces on the planet with multiple people in small spaces involved entail environmental and social problems in their management.

This process of restructuring and change of depopulated rural spaces globally has multiple facets and speeds [2]. In the global North and the global South, it is possible to describe different manifestations of a return to the countryside, but also of an urbanization of rural space. The proximity or distance to large metropolitan areas and large cities determines the combination of elements that influence the de-concentration process. In a broad consideration, adequately distributed the population over space is an adequate global policy, but it can have regional or local manifestations of a different nature, and even negative effects for local and indigenous populations. The new rural inhabitants of urban origin involve processes of social and cultural transformation [3], in the form of a recomposing of the local social structure, the emergence of new leaderships and interests and a displacement of traditional populations [4]. They also influence new cultural dynamics that tend to integrate local traditions into more global cultural processes. On the other hand, these processes of comeback to the countryside can transform territorial structures and generate new environmental and housing problems. In this context emergent processes of social and environmental change in rural areas need a nature-based dimension in a post urban period [5].

A geographical perspective is relevant to understand sustainable transition processes, but it is necessary to carry out research on the politics of the future in a post-urban period. The concept of sustainable rural resilience is a wildcard and umbrella of the fact that these concepts are widely discussed and contested [1]. The analysis of place-framing in



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sustainability rural transitions and transformation linked with socio-material forms of development and visions of future socio-constructions [2]. In this framework of multilayered context of global change to local change is possible an open play between scalar spheres to analyze the concept of sustainable rural resilience through the dialectic relationship between resistance and resilience.

The main question of research is the use and intertwined nature of concepts resistance and resilience in regards to sustainable rural transitions, depending on the scale of analysis. This topic is original in rural geographical literature, yet weakly develops in empirical terms and in regards to its application to real cases, plans or projects. In a different approach compared to mainstream literature where vulnerability and resilience are understood as two extremes in the progression of the capacities of communities facing management changes and threats. In consequence, the main argument of this essay is that processes of sustainable rural transitions combine periods of resilience and resistance in the rural place/community and scalar dimensions.

The contribution doesn't have a methodology section and must be considered an exploratory essay and the proposal of a theoretical framework. Therefore, in the future controls to apply should aim at the testing the proposed framework and developing the discussion of the suggestions concepts based in empirical cases studies.

2. Resistance and/or Resilience

The concepts of resistance and resilience are constantly discussed in the geographical literature [3–5], but they shows disengaged in geographical analyzes in time-space processes. In this contribution we consider them in a complementary way within the framework of processes of rural change at different territorial scales.

2.1. Resiliences

Despite its widespread use in the geographical literature on rural areas, the concept of resilience in society has relevant limitations, particularly in the analysis of social change [6]. Typically, as stated in the popular Cambridge Dictionary online, [7] resilience is 'the quality of being able to return quickly to a previous good condition after problems'. This is a point of view widely followed in the geographical literature. Among the main specialized dictionaries of Human Geographies the key-word resilience is not considered, it only appears in the International Encyclopedia of Human Geography in the glossary of the key word 'vulnerability' [8] (p. 176) as 'the ability of a system to return to a prior state after having experiences a shock', or in the glossary of the key word 'famine' as 'the ability of people to recover from stress and to protect them-selves against future stresses' [9] (p. 14), or the a subsection of the key word 'systems theory' [10] as 'the ability to return to the original state following a disturbance' (p. 156).

The resilience concept is used in rural areas in multiple directions: (A) Associated with cultural landscape in the context of global transformation processes where each particular landscape is subject to events and decisions adopted in distant locations and that generate different end types of cultural landscapes [11]: (1) landscapes of agricultural intensification as a product of transitions towards more productive agriculture associated socio-economic development of rural areas, (2) marginalized landscapes associated with rural spaces with marginal agriculture and socio-economic decline, (3) landscapes of urbanization and consumption associated with areas affected with processes of creative urbanization, (4) landscapes of renewable power engaged with changes in land use as consequence of renewable energies projects, (5) multifunctional landscapes linked with politics of diversification and fragmentation and (6) landscapes of nature conservation affected by politics of rural preservation. (B) In the context of a traditional cultural heritage linked with policies of cultural tourism and its influence on rural community resilience [12]. (C) Minor narratives of resilience in time of crisis associated with secure rural environment in relation to urban global pressures. The rural environment emerges as a resilient and supportive environment in periods of crisis, where social innovation can be developed

and is possible to find employment opportunities, especially in agriculture and rural entrepreneurship [13]. In this socio-spatial context there are two main types of discourses about resilience: farmers or traditional and incomers or pluralistic. The rural (remote) space is an opportunity (labor and economic) and security (emotional and social) in time of crisis. The types of adaptation towards resilience are very diverse given that local areas themselves at the local level are extremely heterogeneous.

Wilson [14] suggests a conceptual framework for understanding rural community trajectories in periods of change based on the quality of multifunctional resilience in rural areas. Strong resilience and sustainability are associated with notable multifunctionality in rural communities; on the contrary, poor multifunctionality generates vulnerability in rural communities. Wilson [3] (p. 1218) argues 'that theoretical concepts such as transition theory can provide a lens through which resilience pathways at community level can be better understood, and proposes a framework focused on a social resilience approach for understanding community resilience as the conceptual space at the intersection between economic, social and environmental capital'. In definitive for Wilson strong resilience is an idea of multifunctional –economic, social and environmental- rurality. In this author's point of view [14] (p. 371) multi is resilient and mono is vulnerable. For some other author's rural resilience is a reaction to rural decline [4]. This orientation is an optimistic vision of rural life that contrasts with the pessimism of adversity. Rural resilience would be a stable adaptation with multiple forms that obey local circumstances [4], such as the nature of local problems, the emergence and application of new technologies, or the competitive position in the context of other local communities. The notion of resilience is an ad hoc concept, and would be associated with the vision of belonging.

On the contrary, by associating resistance and resilience as a process in time-space (adaptation -of individuals, systems and materiality- and stability), one never returns to the initial state, since another socio-spatial encounter is always generated. The process of adaptive associated with resilience is a permanent becoming to stability, with strength of gradual changes. Adaptation processes are not 'sweet', on the contrary they often entail adversity for local communities.

2.2. Resistances and Resiliencies

According to Cupples [15] (p. 370) the concept of resistance 'broadly understood as the political and cultural struggles carried out by social actors to oppose challenge, or undermine dominant workings of power or the normative production of space'. Resistance encompasses many multifaceted forms of response, struggle and activity. In time of change, resistance, tactics and proper places competing in a 'subject position'. The heterogeneity of sites also indicates 'the importance of heteroclite political geographies' [16] (p. 194). In this analytical way, as suggest Gregory [16] (p. 196) 'negotiation of these differences and dissonances that a space is opened for resistance'. The process of resistance and subject positions conform new socio-spatial types of 'subaltern subjectivities' [16] (p. 198). There are two forms of resistance: (1) organized and visible, usually as a response strategy of one or several rural communities against actions of extra local public and private agents and (2) subtle, mundane and individual more diffuse, where resistance responds to individual interests within the community itself, according to processes of social fragmentation that resistance in the face of adversity generates within the rural community itself [17]. These two forms of resistance often act jointly or complementary.

2.2.1. Resistance, Power and Anti-Opposite

Resistance is associated with power in a geographical point of view of scalar position of space, but also in a localized social structure. Post-structuralism theory 'power's outside' point out, different approaches and conceptualization of power between nominalism and materiality of power. Power is a contested concept in the geographical literature. In the post structural vision of power, it is possible to observe: (A) Powers is not a closed system (politics, power and spaces). (B) Power is the result of multiple processes in

which social actors is located. In this sense power as a multidimensional field in which actors of all types operate and suggest a type of resistance anti or opposite. Actors can be understood as positioned in a system of power. (C) Powers at individual level is the last trend in the power analysis and suggests greater analytical complexity within the (rural) community [18]: ‘Individuals operate simultaneously in and array of power relations across many geographic locations and scales’ [19] (p. 380–381).

In relation to these interpretive problems Warf [19] (p. 374–375) point out that post-modernism is both object and attitude. In this analytical way resistance to the forces of modernity is possible suggests: (1) Postmodern condition, as a reaction to meta-narrative. (2) Condition of post modernity based in minor theory and the right of difference in social and spatial terms. (3) Distinctively postmodern, based in the emergence of others in the community. In an argument with notable interest for rural areas, Peet [20] introduces the idea that development and alternative futures as discourse is a key path in rural areas in post-development. A new or renewed imaginary of development emerge with two possible routes: 1. Post structural criticism of the discourse and practice of development can clear the ground for more radical ideas of alternative futures. 2. Alternatives to development associated with a theoretical practices transformation which draws on the practices of third world of social movements. An example is the radicalization of rural resistance of marginalized social groups in the process of change of traditional ways of life in rural areas [21]. Difference suggests resistance [22] (p. 260) ‘to the inequalities and uneven power relations fostered by others. In this sense resistance is a broad category used by social geographers to describe any form of independent initiative. ‘It is now being unpacked to emphasize such elements as the way people are resilient in the fall of power and rework situations of oppression’ [22] (p. 263).

2.2.2. Resistance and Permanence

The reading and interpretation of resistance processes in declining areas are associated with continuity and permanence. Tension emerges from resistance in place. Not moving and continuing life in place in the context of national and global changes gives meaning to local resistance. Once the sociopolitical changes and their local effects have been overcome, the recompositing of the locality enters a period of stability that is usually negative as a whole (loss of population), but positive individually. ‘Ongoing adaptation to the conditions of rural places characterizes the plural and flexible strategies of resistance for permanence in a place. Resistance does not have an anti- or opposite character; rather, resistance reflects continuity and permanence’ [5] (p. 25). Four types of resistance that converge in a locality and in a plurality of individuals: (1) landscape resistance, based on the defense of a particular characteristic and traditional cultural landscape (2) place resistance, based on defense of the constructed and living space; (3) community resistance, based on upholding traditional customs, with a degree of community materiality and (4) administrative resistance, based on the continuity of the local governance [17].

2.2.3. Resistance and Resilience

In some previous research [23] we discussed the concept of resistance and resilience associated with farmers who remained in depopulated areas: ‘In the present study, resilience is associated with permanence or resistance of farming professionals in a place or farm, by the adaptation of their daily lives and the characteristics of the farm to the different processes of change over a long period of time. Resilience is understood as the final stage of this process of permanence that achieves a complex adaptation to a life and territory with a reduced population and density. The processes of change and resistance coexist, the former associated with transformations and new dynamics that generate losses (or gains) and the second associated with adaptation and spatial mobility. Processes of resilience correspond to the sum of all the adaptations to processes of change and resistance in a place, and are specific to each farmer. The sum of these processes of change and resistance produces a new situation of resilience or stability with a new setting clearly adapted to the

depopulation situation, characterized by daily or seasonal mobility, reduced number of farmers, the amalgamation of farms, a loss or important change in the community spirit and a disappearance or drastic reduction in rural communities. As explained, resilience is associated with the rural community in an undifferentiated way' [23] (p. 1). For Paniagua the appropriate interpretation of resilience is a stability period as a result of a process of change with probably situated socioeconomic inequality, demographic danger or poor environmental quality. Ultimately, it was suggested that the concepts of resilience and resistance are not antagonistic but complementary over time. All rural communities have both elements of resistance and resilience. This vision of resilience and resistance in the context of processes of rural change and restructuring has notable usefulness in the analysis of local processes and strategies within the community in the face of national and global processes. Resistance and resilience strategies are connected, but they are successive in time. Resistance processes are short and resilience processes are long, with areas or periods of overlap. In definitive resistance and permanence in time is resilience spatial status.

3. Spheres of Resilience and Resistance

To understand resilience in Wilson's opinion [3] it is necessary to address the local community level first and before scaling-up. Community resilience would be a balance with states of scalar interactions from regional at global level. All communities, even those located in remote rural areas, would be affected by globalization processes in Wilson's opinion [3]. Thus, there would be communities that would maximize their resilience as a result of an adequate balance with global levels and others that would reduce their resilience due to their over-dependence on local communities' resources [3].

In this contribution we point out that resistance and resilience operate at all spatial levels (Table 1). For example, a community in stay of resilience is possible in a global period of resistance. In all scales different actors operate with opposite and diverse points of view. Resilience and resistance coexist at different spheres, even at the local level:

(A) Global level and global contradictions. Dominated by the great processes of rural restructuring: Economic structural crisis and readjustments, global socio-political processes of change, contested politics of global climate change, changes in demography (aging, decline population, mobility urban-rural areas), social and technical infrastructure. There would be two main points of view [3]: globalization reduces the isolation of communities and increases the quality of resilience; the anti-globalization point of view, that associate globalization to weak resilience or vulnerable rural communities (Table 1).

Table 1. Types of scalar spheres.

Resilience Model Stability	Mix Model Bottom Up	Mix Model from Above	Resistance Model. Tensions
Global resilience	Global resilience	Global resistance	Global resistance
National resilience	National resilience	National resistance	National resistance
Regional resilience	Regional resistance	Regional resilience	Regional resistance
Individual and local resilience	Individual and local resistance	Individual and local resilience	Individual and local resistance

Source: own elaboration.

(B) National level. Dominated by the territorial pressure of urban areas or the resistance/resilience of rural areas against urban pressures. Mainly particular processes of rural restructuring mediated by the state conditions or the national process of rural restructuring, as a consequence of the play between different rural areas in a nation state. Actors as new social movements operate at this level, as a supra-level of regional convergence. The politics is dominated by the emergence and relevance of strategic planning policies and new recreational policies. An example is the adaptation of European policies and politics with participation (or not) of agrarian unions, new social movements (mainly ecological), national public agencies.

(C) Regional level. Dominated by: (1) regional rural resilience in a relational play of rural regional areas. (2) The resistance actions against regional process of decline in national contexts in an open play with other regions with similar characteristics. (3) The power of urban politics. Regional agrarian unions, regional public agencies, regional ecologists' organizations operate at this level.

(D) Local and individual levels. In this level is possible a combination of a stay of resilience and a stay of resistance in time space or scalar consideration. In the locality play new power relationship of rural change: Farmers, new comers ... The local and individual are associated with tensions and adaptive strategies in notable spectrum of community rural recipients and infinite variations and plays, linked with a variety of resistance strategies [24]. Communities are socially heterogeneous and consequently the resilience pathway is different for each individual in the same community [3], in the same way the resistance strategies in change processes are individual according to the interests and socioeconomic characteristics of each person [23] in remote rural areas. In this sense, Hernan [25] points out that maintaining the socio-economic and environmental values of a community contributes to preserving the people-place connection as a significant element of social resilience. In this orientation Rice and Burke [26] suggest the place-based inclusive solidarities based in environmental resistances against global normative views. In any case, the local sphere is a microcosm of individual situations of resistance and resilience. In the individual sphere operate a singular emotional and moral resilience.

4. Styles of Complementarities

With a greater or lesser level of complexity, resilience and resistance coexist in all spatial spheres, even at the local level, where they acquire more plural orientations.

In all spheres play resistance and resilience in a 'cascade effect'. Resilience states are more common at higher scales, while resistance strategies are more abundant at lower scales. Great processes of resilience on global scales are usually combined with minor and fluid processes of resistance, even at human scale. The monolithic stays in global levels coexists with infinite plural situations in local/individual spheres. In sum, there would be four types or styles of resistance and resilience in a scalar perspective (Table 1): (1) Resilience model of stability, characterized by stability, continuity and relative 'tranquility', in all scalar spheres. It is associated with prolonged periods of political (authoritarian or democratic) and socioeconomic stability. (2) Mix model bottom up, is a transition model where the keys to national and global stability after periods of transformation pressure communities to introduce and implement changes at the local level in the socio-economic and governance spheres. Different global processes affect local areas in different ways, even in stages of national political stability (e.g., China). (3) Mix model from above, in this type the large processes of neoliberal readjustment at the global and national level generate resistance strategies, but it has not been transferred to the lower levels where resilience of the types of traditional agrarian organization dominates. An example is the Mexican ejidos with stability at local or regional levels but affected by processes of unstable change at the national and global level [27–29], another example is the permanence in place in rural areas in decline [17]. (4) Resistance model, where tensions exist at all scales. This type is generated by large readjustment processes where global processes are quickly transferred to regional and local scales and tensions are prolonged over time. The first and fourth types would be convergent models between all scales, while the second and third types would be transition models.

5. Resilience and Resistance in the Community Sphere

The rural community or rural locality is the sphere where geographical analyzes on resilience and resistance studies are concentrated. Some recent analysis [25] suggest a place-based vision and strategies in sustainability actions.

As we noted previously, resilience is stability relative and adaptive processes in a permanent becoming (Table 2). On the contrary, resistances are plural tensions: Construc-

tive or positive tensions amalgamate the interest of rural community and promote new socioeconomic opportunities and destructive or on the contrary negative tensions associated with social fragmentation and decline. In a space-time consideration stability suggests minor adjustments and changes or tensions are associated with strong adjustments in rural community.

Table 2. Resilience and resistance stay in process of change in rural community.

Community—change (resistance to change)—adaptation—(adapt to adverse conditions)—resilience.

A resilient characteristic of rural community is a reaction to adverse circumstances as a consequence of processes of change. Ultimately, resilience suggests complex structures of adaptation with the end of reducing the vulnerability. According to Wilson [3] communities in times of change have several phases: a transitional rupture, a period of readjustment and a period of recovery, with a broad connection with the regional, national and global actors and systems spheres. For Wilson [3] the opposite to resilience is vulnerability with intermediate stages of weak or strong resilience in the rural community. In the spectrum of possible resiliencies, the multifunctionality associated with strong and quality resilience is linked to a series of economic characteristics (diversification, economic self-sufficiency...), well-being (good health), social characteristics (close interactions between people, governance structures, open communities...) and environmental (biodiversity, water quality, sustainable management...) of the rural community [14]. Robinson [26] suggests that sustainable rural development in resilient communities must be based on: post-productive countryside, alternative food networks, sustainable tourism actions and politics, and active community participation.

In the context of applied analysis at community level there are varied meanings of rural resilience at local level. Perz et al. [30] operationalize demographic resilience at local level in terms of migration. Net migration and turnover suggest greater community resilience, on the other hand, large values of net migration and turnover as indicators, for these authors, of community vulnerability. For Varguese et al. [31] local control and ownership are indicators of community resilience. In the specific case of Mexican Ejidos [26] these communal and participatory forms of governance, based on an agrarian and forest livelihood strategy and equitable distribution of resources is a good example of ‘fundamental identity’ resilience organization. In this orientation McManus et al. [4] suggest the relevance of a sense of social belonging and community spirit for a stay of community resilience in times of global and national crisis.

The new rural inhabitants of urban precedence involve multiple spatial processes of transformation, both individual and collective, in rural communities. The classic works of Buller and Hoggart [32] and Hoggart [33] reveal that the processes of international counterurbanisation relate spaces of resilience and resistance and help areas in decline. More recently Phillips et al. [34] points out the concept of lived landscapes in complex micro communities of resistance and resilience.

6. Conclusions

The concept of resistance and resilience are widely discussed in the geographical literature, but they are not usually used together or in associated manner. In this contribution, four large spheres are interpreted in a joint and complementary manner where processes of resistance and resilience operate simultaneously, from the local to the global scale. This point of view has a notable opportunity and novelty in the context of the third demographic transition and the turning point in the urban-rural relations [1].

Status resilience can reinforce the rural community or can accentuate its decline and imbalances and depends on the consequences of resistance in the transitional stage and the nature and intensity of tensions. It is simply a period of stability in decline or recovery. It is possible to establish four spheres and styles of complementarity. The

four scalar spheres range from the local to the global level with different actors, policies and processes at each level, with a progressive plurality at the smaller geographical scales. Complementarity styles relate resistance and resilience strategies at each scalar geographical level and between the different geographical scales. The resistance style is dominated by tensions at all scalar levels (local to global) while the resilience style is dominated by resilience in all spheres, they are states of beginning or end of large processes of change, with two states transitional intermediates, mix from above and mix bottom up.

In definitive, the association between resilience and resistance has two readings: the first in space-time in longitudinal view in the local community. In this lecture resistance and resilience would be states of changes of low or high intensity that would affect the lives of people living in the community in different ways. Besides this is a micro reading based on the people who live in the rural community. The second reading is of a scalar type and aims to relate the state of resilience or resistance in the rural community with the processes of change or phases of stability at a regional, national or global level. Not all changes that occur at a global level are incorporated into the national agenda, but they are always transferred in a plural way to rural communities. This is a macro reading that aims to analyze and interpret how changes or relative stability influence the politics of different countries with different structural conditions and how they are ultimately reflected in each community and affect people's lives [5,35].

From a geographical perspective, the combination of these two perspectives is very relevant for the analysis of contemporary change processes in rural areas around the world.

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