



The XXVI European Society for Rural Sociology Congress
Places of Possibility? Rural Societies in a Neoliberal World
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Rural Development in Portugal: Between Willingness and Reality

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To analyse:

the ways in which the rural is represented through the:

- latest Rural Development Programme implemented in the Mainland Portugal from 2007 to 2013 (**ProDeR**)
- narratives of some political actors responsible for its design and/or implementation

&

To confront those outcomes with the political options & priorities for Rural Development

The distribution of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) budget by the 4 Axis of **ProDeR** highlights those political options & priorities for Rural Development

GOALS



In short:

- We study what discourses prevail when politicians make sense of, and suggest solutions for the Mainland Portugal rural areas ?

RELEVANCE of the ISSUE



This issue is of relevance not least because of the problems of:

- rural depopulation
- rural population ageing &
- decline of rural economies

& also because:

- political discourses & programmes take part in forming the basis for policy decisions

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In Portugal, the end of the historically tight overlap between the 'rural' and 'agriculture' is a quite recent event, when compared with the Northern and Central European countries

- In 1945 agriculture still contributed with 38 % of the GDP and occupied 48% of the total active population

Since then, agriculture and rural society have been under several changing processes

- the emigration process during the 1960s; the end of the corporatist dictatorship in 1974 & the adhesion to the EEC in 1986 are important socioeconomic events leading to relevant consequences



Currently

- agriculture is concentrated in a narrower area
- abandonment of agricultural area
- rural population decrease and ageing
- decline of rural economies

The EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE was produced from the CONTENT ANALYSIS of the:

- Rural Development Programme (**ProDeR**)
&
- Narratives of political actors: based on **Semi-structured interviews**

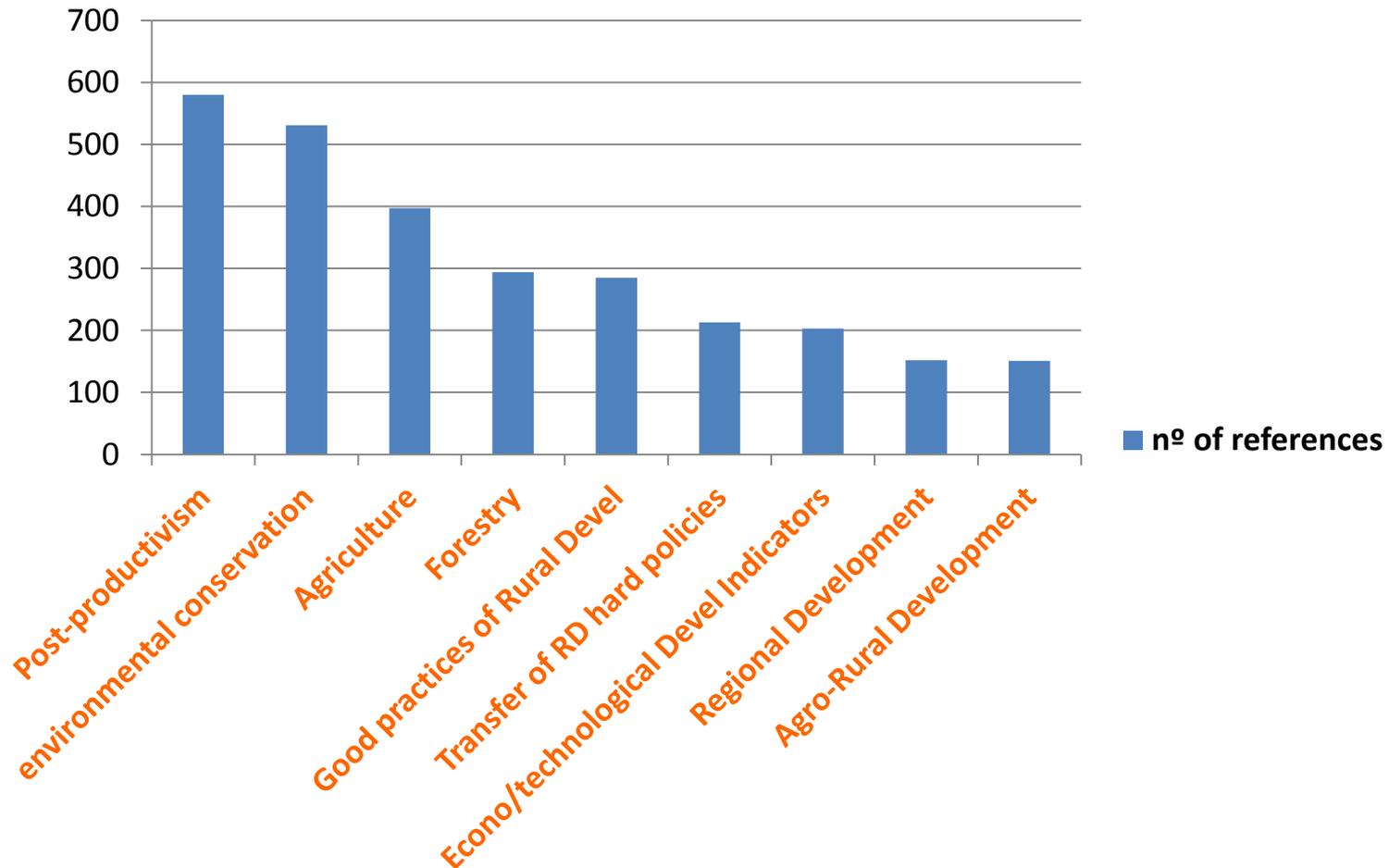
CONTENT ANALYSIS

was based on a comprehensive literature review in order to identify the significant *concepts* associated with the main representations, images and symbols conveyed on rural territories and rural development strategies

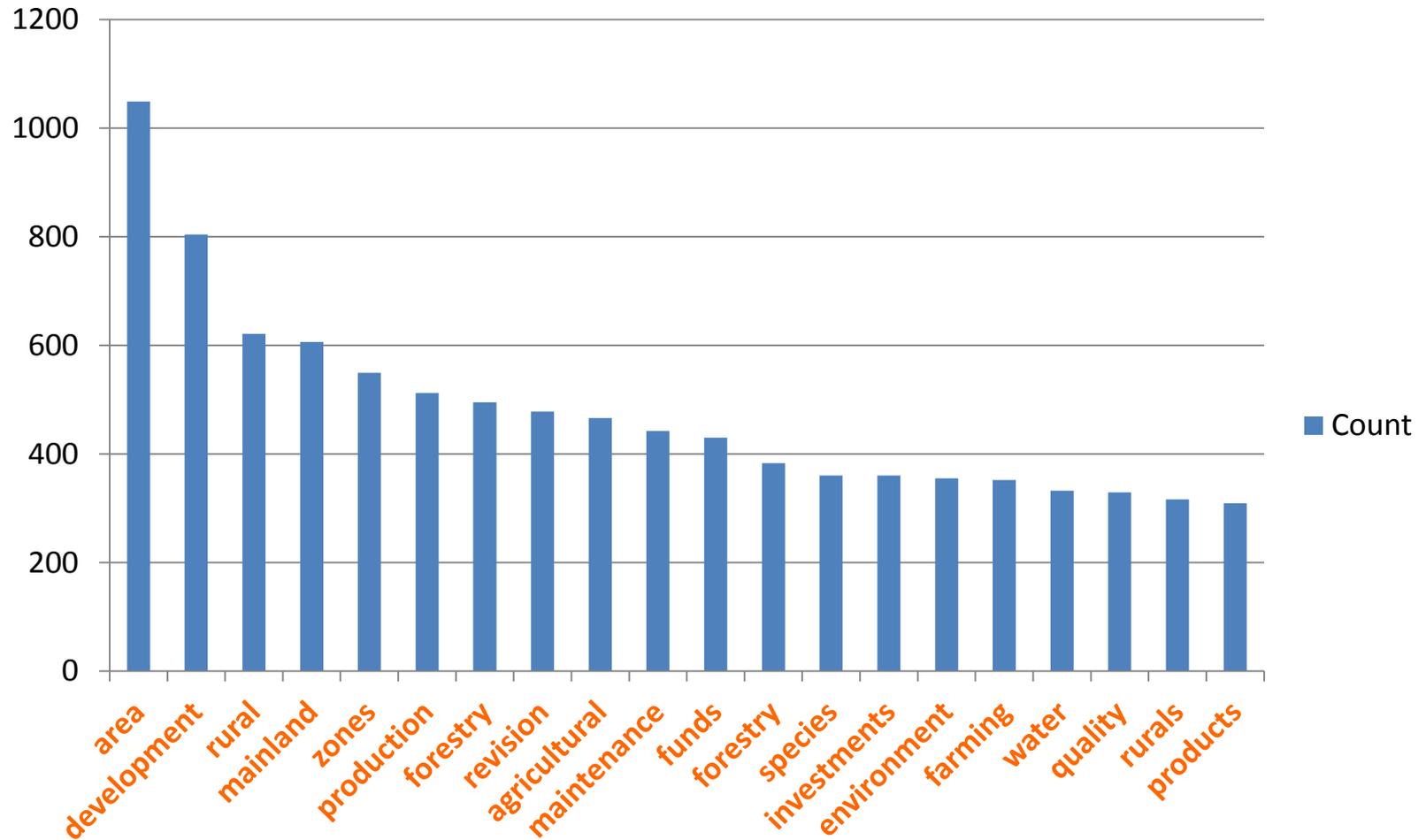
All these concepts were operationalized in variables (*categories*) and indicators (*values*) in a systematic and detailed manner

The content of the document & narratives was analysed through the use of the software NVivo 10

CATEGORIES WITH THE LARGEST AMOUNT OF REFERENCES ON ProDeR



20 MOST CODED WORDS ON ProDeR



TAG CLOUD FEATURING THE MOST FREQUENT SYMBOLS USED ON THE NARRATIVES OF POLITICAL ACTORS



- The MAIN novelties in the 2007-2013 funding period of the CAP, concerning its Pillar II, or Rural Development (RD) Pillar :
 - the introduction of a new Fund: the **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development** (EAFRD)
 - the introduction of “priority axes” in the Pillar II of the CAP

As a result, the Pilar II distinguished :

- a “competitiveness axis” (**Axis 1**) where all the modernisation measures for farms were included
- an “environmental axis” (**Axis 2**) where the environmental and LFA measures were grouped
- and a “diversification of the economy and quality of life axis” (**Axis 3**) under which the territorial measures were regrouped

In addition to these three thematic axes, the horizontal LEADER Axis (**Axis 4**) was included to contribute to the accomplishment of objectives under all previous axis, and mainstreamed the LEADER approach which had been a separate CI until then.

- II — The MAIN novelties in the 2007-2013 funding period of the CAP, concerning its Pillar II, or Rural Development (RD) Pillar :
- EU Member States were able to formulate and set their own priorities for Rural Development (RD), but :
 - at least 10% of the budget proportions paid by the EAFRD must be used for improving the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry (**Axis 1**)
 - at least **25%** to improve the environment and the countryside (**Axis 2**)
 - and at least 10% to diversify the rural economy (**Axis 3**)
 - finally, all Member States must spend at least 5% of the EAFRD share on LEADER-type activities (**Axis 4**)

The Portuguese political options were the following:

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Member-State	EAFRD (%)			
	Axis 1	Axis 2	Axis 3	LEADER Axis
Sweden	14,17	68,98	8,32	6,7
Denmark	21,21	61,68	5,61	9,3
Finland	7,61	81,60	6,53	3,6
Netherlands	29,91	29,70	29,80	9,9
France	38,69	48,70	6,69	4,8
Ireland	11,21	78,75	0,00	9,9
United Kingdom	10,54	75,98	7,83	5,4
Germany	27,99	41,69	23,04	5,7
Italy	38,81	42,04	8,45	8,1
Austria	13,19	72,38	6,47	5,4
Belgium	58,62	26,24	8,48	4,9
Spain	47,87	37,04	4,47	10,1
Portugal	46,83	38,98	0,15	10,1
Greece	44,41	33,77	13,98	5,8

Some Conclusions — I



Despite rural areas in Mainland Portugal are strongly negatively affected by population decrease, ageing, and economic decline:

- 47% of the total EAFRD was allocated to the “competitiveness axis” (**Axis 1**)
- That means, **37% above** the budget proportions to be used in **Axis 1**, as defined by the Commission

In Mainland Portugal, as in Spain, a significant part of the Axis 1 funds were affected to irrigation infrastructures. However:

- while in Spain mostly of those funds were used to implemented small & medium irrigation schemes, in Portugal the priority was the largest irrigation scheme of Alqueva

Thus:

- the option of Spain  besides the competitiveness of the farms, the social & territorial functions of the farms have also been reinforced
- the option of Portugal  competitiveness of the farms *tout court*

How this reality fits into the political discourses and representations of the rural ?

ProDeR

*The **four** categories with the largest n^o of references:*

Post-Productivism

Environmental Conservation

Agriculture

Forestry

*The **seven** most coded **words**:*

Area

Development

Rural

Mainland

Zones

Production

Forestry

Political Actors

Rural

Agriculture

Regional

People

Persons

Direction

Post-Productivism & Environmental Conservation in ProDeR



What do political discourses mean with **Post-Productivism**?

a) extenfication, dispersion and diversification of agriculture (Ibery e Bowler, 1998) ?

OR

b) do they assume a “broader” definition of the concept, where the it goes further production (Mather *et al.*, 2006) and includes other aims, namely, social and territorial functions ?

Answer: NO: **Agriculture, Forestry, Production, Forestry, Rural, Agriculture** are the main coded categories and words in the political discourses

Some Conclusions — IV



I – Contradictions within ProDeR : **the rhetoric** (post productivism + Environmental Conservation) & **the priorities when distributing the RD budget**

II – Agreement between ProDeR & the narratives of political actors



Both convey a rural based upon the traditional activities, e.g, **AGRICULTURE & Forestry** & functions, e.g, **PRODUCTIVE FUNCTIONS**



Even in the RD Programme, Portugal still continues to drive its main goal, when it adhered to the EEC in 1986, e.g:
to modernize its agricultural structures in order to “catch up” its Central and Northern European counterparts

In short:

there is a contradiction between the willingness to implement rural development, that is rhetoric, and the reality (how RD budget was affected)



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Muito obrigada

Thank you very much

<http://ruralmatters.web.ua.pt>

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