Today the predominant planning policy and discourse is urbanity and rurality as antipodes. This discourse makes abstraction of the various gradients in between city and countryside, which makes it hard to identify spatial entities or concepts.

The OECD uses a density of 150 inhabitants/km² as a threshold when defining urban and rural. This value however poses problems in densely populated areas. Large parts of Northwestern European models, according to this criterion, have no rural areas at all, strongly in contrast with local perception.

In 2007 the predominant planning discourse was urban versus rural. Neither countryside nor city can, in the context of rapid urbanisation, be considered exclusively identifiable spatial entities or concepts.

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Instead of zoning these apparently conflicting programmes - urban being highly dense, accessible and built-up; rural being low, transverse, nature and open - we should aim at interrelating them based on common functional characteristics and the desired quality of space.

Towards a landscape of mixed urbanity and rurality

The process of urbanisation leaves us a fragmented landscape in which the traditional boundaries between city and countryside, generating new qualities for a larger region. The discussion should no longer be about the opposition of urban and rural, but about the way in which the dualities can be introduced based on the existing dynamics, processes, meanings and values of the territories. Alternative planning discourses

The instrument of zoning should no longer be about which function is designated to a specific area, but instead it should state under which conditions a function can be deployed in a certain area.

The futures of cities are RURBAN