

Reterritorialization practices and strategies of *campesinos* in the urban frontier of Bogotá, Colombia

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This article is dedicated to the memory of Jaime Adalberto Beltrán Salamanca (1963-2020), community leader in Usme, Bogotá.

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ABSTRACT

Much of the research on urbanization has focused on how rural populations move to cities for work opportunities. This paper takes a different perspective on the relations between rural populations and urbanization. The livelihoods of rural dwellers on the outskirts of the city of Bogotá in Colombia are increasingly affected by the expansion of urban activities and infrastructure. Therefore, urbanization takes place in the areas of residence of the rural populations; these people do not migrate to the city but, rather, the city migrates to them. Consequently, rural ways of life face growing competition from the production of commodities and services on the urban-rural fringe, including quarrying and landfills serving the needs of industries and urban populations. We explore how rural populations and their livelihoods have transformed as a response to these urban dynamics and the expansion of the city. We focus on the strategies that the rural populations employ to deal with the physical and socio-ecological impacts of this change. The defense of peri-urban livelihoods through these strategies is simultaneously social and spatial and has been partially successful. However, increasing social and environmental inequality, including worsening access to land, water and vital ecological functions, tends to lead to a general reduction in the quality of life in the urban frontier.

“The countryside (*el campo*) has been seen as backwardness.” Quote from a Colombian practitioner in an interview in Bogotá, January 2018.

1. Introduction

In 2007, the United Nations declared that for the first time in human history more than half of the world's population was living in cities and towns (United Nations, 2007), and the trend has been increasing since (United Nations-DESA 2019). As planetary urbanization megatrends (Brenner, 2014; Buckley and Strauss, 2016) and *depeasantization* (Araghi, 1995; McMichael, 2012) are part and parcel of contemporary global changes, we ask, what happens when peasants do not migrate to the city but, rather, the city expands to their areas of residence? Debates questioning the urban-rural binaries in relation to the planetary urbanization address how rural life is present in urbanization processes and actively shapes them (Arboleda, 2016). In fact, rural aspects are an irreplaceable element of many (if not all) urbanization processes (Angelo and

Wachsmuth, 2015; Arboleda, 2016), frequently resulting in hybrid urban-rural spaces in metropolitan regions. These territorial assemblages (Deleuze and Guattari [1987], 2005; Haesbaert, 2014) whose local inhabitants produce counter-spaces to contest urban capitalism (Lefebvre [1974], 1991) are different from inter-urban agglomerations associated with the concept of conurbation (Pérez Martínez et al., 2011). This difference becomes visible in “peripheral urbanization”, as outlined by Caldeira (2017) in her account of how people construct urban space. We add to her argument the notion of rural populations and their identities in spaces that are consumed by the urban expansion in Latin American cities such as the Colombian capital Bogotá. This is our point of departure in this article to re-evaluate specific transformative processes taking place in the urban-rural interface.

Most rural areas in Bogotá, despite being legally recognized as areas for farming activities and ecological protection, have been considered by planners and real estate stakeholders as areas for urban development, or they have been employed to allocate extractive and waste disposal activities away from the city core. Often, state action has failed to recognize rural communities and their established ways of life and local

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economies as key to the development of the city region, yet those communities have managed to overcome this limitation through joint action with state institutions when needed.

In this article, we explore the practices and strategies employed by rural populations in response to the expansion of physical urban infrastructure into areas previously considered rural and the associated spread of urban lifestyles and power-relations. Consequent landscape transformations involve the conversion of land cover, exploitation of non-renewable resources, loss of local biodiversity, disruption of ecosystem functions, forced migration of farmers, and changes in livelihoods and commuting patterns. In order to deal with the situation, rural populations in Bogotá construct their own space by engaging in territorial practices and strategies which are often based on rural identities and situated knowledge. These practices and strategies are our main research interest in this paper, as we aim to understand how the agency and environmental mobilizations of the rural populations seek to reterritorialize their spaces of dwelling.

Our case-study emphasizes that both the strategies and the practices are based on situated knowledge that interacts with environmental discourse, and involves an incremental development of expert knowledge on ecology and land-use law. Consequently, traditional means of life become combined with external influences and expertise from rural populations' relationships with state institutions and academic centers to sustaining everyday lives in rural properties and households despite the urban growth. As a dialogical cycle of production of knowledge and reterritorialization, the process of reterritorialization has been, in turn, producing particular forms of situated knowledge of nature in rural Bogotá.

In the following section, we present the conceptual and theoretical elements of the rural characteristics of urbanization in this case-study, including initial reflections on the reterritorialization process in the urban frontier and the social and political context for understanding the situation for the peasant communities (*comunidades campesinas*) in Colombia and Bogotá specifically. In the third section, we describe our research methods and materials. The fourth section is devoted to describing the key elements of the social and political context for rural spaces in Bogotá, including land-use issues and the ways in which the *campesino* communities have been organized. The fifth section presents the main outcomes of our research, highlighting strategies and practices of the *campesino* communities in *Usme* and *Ciudad Bolívar*. Before the conclusions and policy recommendations, the sixth section offers discussion on our empirical findings against the conceptual framework related to the transformations of urban space.

2. Rural characteristics of urbanization

2.1. The urban frontier and reterritorialization

The notion of peri-urbanization has connotations that link it to the gaze of the urban planner, working on maps over the areas where the city spaces are designed to expand. In our view, rather than planned urban extensions, these spaces often become territorial assemblages (cf. Deleuze and Guattari [1987], 2005; Haesbaert, 2014; Pérez-Martínez, 2016) where stakeholders with different identities, land use interests and values deliver de/re-territorialization processes producing space and landscapes. We understand a territory as a socio-spatial product that reflects multiple symbolic and material appropriations of a specific place on an everyday basis through people's strategies and practices of *territorialization* (Quimbayo Ruiz, 2020). What is crucial in a process of territorialization is that the subjects are related to one another and to the characteristic features of the space in question. Through these relations, the subjects claim the space as their own and thereby discursively construct their territory. Thus, the relational tendency of the features of space to change also causes territories not to be fixed but in flux. Deterritorialization, in turn, means the dissolution of the existing territorial formations, while reterritorialization is the formation of new

territories in place of pre-existing ones (Haesbaert, 2014).

Following this idea, it can be argued that the identities of rural dwellers are territorial. Expanding urban capitalism is de-territorializing the spaces in which the rural populations live and practice their livelihoods. These rural dwellers, in turn, are facing the urbanization processes, seeking to re-territorialize their living environments, which causes a clash between the visions and actions of the city's urban planning system and the perceptions, identities, and actions of the rural dwellers. In order to get closer to the ideas of the local population in Bogotá, we refer to the notion of the urban frontier. By employing the notion of frontier, we wish to point out that the urban fringe is undergoing constant changes. Locally, it is called the border territory (*el territorio de borde*), where powerful urban stakeholders push the limits of the urban areas to consume rural space. According to Pérez-Martínez (2008: 68), in Bogotá, "[t]hese territories are immersed in a twofold dynamic of occupation, with which we refer to fringes between the urban periphery and the defined suburban areas in which rural communities live, where there is still no great densification and there is still an intense subdivision of small plots, which share their means of production with recreational residences of urban dwellers, housing centers of social interest or, even dormitories of urban employees". This is where the *campesinos* of southern Bogotá live.

2.2. Colombian *campesinos*

The capital of Colombia, Bogotá, is an autonomous municipality (Capital District, *Distrito Capital*), with an estimated population of about 7,300,000 (DANE: <http://www.dane.gov.co>) in 2018. The district is composed of 20 political administrative units called *localidades* (hereafter locality), most of which are completely urban while some include relatively large rural areas. In Bogotá there are several types of inhabitants in the rural spaces that are being taken over by urban expansion. These include farmers who work as private small-scale or medium-scale entrepreneurs, but also farmers and agricultural workers with alternative means of living and agricultural production. Furthermore, there are rural inhabitants who see themselves as indigenous people (*Muisca* people) and seek formal recognition of this position (Vargas Mariño, 2015; Valencia, 2016). Many different ingredients of rural identities then may combine in one person or community. In our work, we focus on people who self-claim themselves to be *campesinas* (feminine) and *campesinos* (masculine) and who identify themselves as belonging to the rural communities¹. The closest translation of such notions from Spanish to English are *peasants* (as people) and *peasantry* (as a community).

According to Marc Edelman (2013: 13) "(...) [t]he terms 'peasant' and 'peasantry' and their cognates in other languages have long and complicated histories that reflect both peasants' deep presence in most societies – even today – and their political and social subordination in those societies". Recently, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UN-HRC) (2018) issued the declaration "on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas", offering this definition:

"(...) a peasant is any person who engages or who seeks to engage alone, or in association with others or as a community, in small-scale agricultural production for subsistence and/or for the market, and who relies significantly, though not necessarily exclusively, on family or household labor and other non-monetized ways of organizing labor, and who has a special dependency on and attachment to the land." (Article 1)

¹ Language matters. As authors, we are aware of the importance of inclusive language and gender equality. For instance, in Spanish, peasant communities are referred to as feminine: *comunidades campesinas*. Therefore, the reader should assume when we use the words *campesino* or *campesinos*, these words are encompassing all rural people whether they belong to women, men, or non-binary identities.

Although this declaration acknowledges the myriad ways of being a peasant, it is utterly production-oriented (Duarte, 2018) and, rather than providing an analytical definition of peasantry, presents the lowest common denominator. The Colombian National Constitution acknowledges only the productive nature of the peasantry and the peasants, without explicitly recognizing them as a subject of special constitutional protection entitled to their own identity and cultural practices. Nevertheless, peasants are not only productive subjects, but a group of people seeking to maintain their own identity and cultural traits. At the same time, in a globalized capitalist world they are not detached from urbanization understood simultaneously as a social, political and economic process often leading to processes of *depeasantization* (Araghi, 1995; McMichael, 2012; Vanhaute, 2012; Kay, 2016), with adverse phenomena such as proletarianization, including increasing relative poverty and inequality, and acculturation, including loss of traditional livelihoods (Alavi and Shanin, 2003).

Despite demands made by Colombian peasant movements supported by allied politicians and experts to promote a constitutional reform in the country, only indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, but not peasant communities, can obtain a legally recognized status. Claims for this same kind of recognition for peasant communities have been opposed by scholars and activists who fear that while indigenous and Afro-Colombian people are also peasants, granting this same status for peasant communities in general could eventually create tensions between different groups (Hoffmann, 2016). In the context of Latin America, a legally established status for peasant communities is not a rarity, however. For example, in Peru peasant communities can obtain a legally recognized status granted through specific associated legislation (Ardito, 1997).

The legal exclusion of those Colombian *campesinos* who are not recognized with an ethnic status as indigenous or Afro-Colombian (though who are also historically excluded populations) has reinforced their marginalization, stigmatization, and criminalization, making them one of the most vulnerable sectors of population in the country (Gutiérrez Sanín and García Reyes, 2016; Ojeda and González, 2018). Moreover, the state, market forces, media and academia, have all depicted *campesino* identities in diverse and often contradictory ways oscillating between indispensability and expendability (García Becerra and Ojeda, 2018). Simultaneously, in the context of the internal armed conflict, the *campesinos* have been an object of multiple material and symbolic dispossessions committed by state forces, paramilitary death squads, guerrillas, and some representatives of private business (Hoffmann, *op. cit.*). Nonetheless, despite constant attacks against their rights to the land, there is also the longstanding and creative political mobilization by peasant organizations (Osorio 2016). This mobilization has resulted in a growing political culture that presents the peasant identity as a constitutive element of Colombian society (Departamento Nacional de Planeación-DANE, 2020).

In Bogotá, the *campesinos* form various separate communities that are located in specific places in the peri-urban and rural areas of the District. The *campesinos* tend to see their communities as social and spatial units, with territorial dimensions. The communities are held together by common identities consisting of, among others, ethnic or livelihood-related features. The level of political mobilization to improve living conditions in the communities varies, and there are also individuals and organizations within the communities who hold formally recognized positions in development projects coordinated by state level administrations.

2.3. Peripheral urbanization and the *campesinos*

The impacts of urbanization on rural Bogotá can be traced through material and symbolic implications in the everyday rural way of life. Urban dwellers in Bogotá (*bogotanos*) are still mostly unaware of the existence of rural populations at the periphery of the city, even though the recent positioning on the district political agenda has allowed the

acknowledgment of these *campesinos* as *bogotanos*. For example, *campesinos* are seen as people helping with water conservation or as food providers for urban dwellers. They are also seen as people without political agency. Moreover, when they are recognized as part of the district, they are associated with an environmentally romantic and urban-centered depiction, where concrete socio-spatial injustices are absent (García González et al., 2020). Probably this situation is also related to the common imagery regarding the rural way of life as being marginal or backward, as the quote cited at the beginning of this article shows.

On the other hand, Teresa Caldeira's notion of "auto-construction" (2017, 5) emphasizes the agency of marginalized inhabitants in urban spaces and points out how residents in cities tend to construct their own urban environments. Auto-construction is related to the "peripheral", which nevertheless does not mean that auto-construction would necessarily occur in the hinterlands. It is rather that the residents who have a crucial role in the production of urban space are considered peripheral in relation to the formal planning system. While auto-construction takes place outside the administrative urban planning system, the construction of urban space by the marginalized populations is often very well planned by the inhabitants themselves. The residents are not simply consumers of spaces developed and regulated by urban planners and managers of businesses, but clear agents of urbanization. It is only that the logic of auto-construction occurs transversally with the formal planning logic. This logic of urbanization has been similar to the one experienced in Bogotá's peripheral neighborhoods (*barrios*), where people and communities have used collective actions to struggle for their right to the city (cf. Julio and Hernández, 2014; Peña, 2014; Quimbayo Ruiz, 2018).

Following Caldeira's conceptualization of Latin American urbanization processes (Caldeira, 2017), it can be emphasized that there are certain processes of urbanization that produce new modes of politics together with the emergence of hybrid urban-rural spaces in metropolitan regions. In Bogotá, such spaces in the periphery is where the *campesinos* live. There are significant differences between Caldeira's use of auto-construction (2017) and our research subject; her emphasis is on the construction of explicitly urban space while our research focuses on the reconstruction of rural space within the expanding urban space. We draw on the idea behind Caldeira's notion and the tendency of the rural residents to construct their own environments within the expanding urban space. In our case, what is constructed is not only physical space but also a variety of *campesino* ways of life involving different agricultural activities in the urbanizing environment.

Therefore, we are interested in the strategies of the *campesinos* in their struggle to deal with urbanization. We explore how the *campesinos* perform various reterritorialization practices that seek to impact on the de-territorializing processes. These processes are reflected in environmental conflicts against state-led and joint public-private development projects, where profit maximization and financial capital accumulation are often the priority (cf. Pérez Rincón, 2015; Pérez-Rincón et al., 2017). Through such practices and strategies the *campesinos* may employ situated knowledge and draw on environmental imperatives to agitate political action. Situated knowledge arises from a subject's physical presence in, experience on, and understanding of a specific spatially defined context (Haraway, 1988). Such knowledge is not fixed, but part of wider networks influenced by and influencing broader political, economic, and social forces such as globalization of markets and technologies (Horowitz, 2015, 243). Situated knowledge can also intertwine with technical-scientific concepts in everyday environmental struggles (Li, 2015), enabling the emergence of counter expertise at the local scale towards politically legitimated notions of the environment. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that the actions in environmental struggles at specific places also incorporate contradictions and paradoxes (Lawhon et al., 2014; Loftus, 2012), such as historically marginalized communities becoming involved with political instrumentalization or cooptation by partisan politics of their cultural traditions in their relationship

with the state.

3. Methods and materials

Our research focuses on the localities of *Usme* and *Ciudad Bolívar* within the administrative boundaries of Bogotá where farming settlements on the high Andean plateau of *Sabana de Bogotá* and its surrounding mountains are affected by urbanization advancing on the southern urban-rural fringe of the city (Map 1 and Image 1). The case study belongs to the first author's doctoral project on environmental conflicts related to spatial planning in Bogotá (Quimbayo Ruiz, 2018, 2020). The project has created plenty of research material, including public documents (and statistics), interviews and participant observation. The earliest data from public sources is from the 1990s, while the interviews and observations are from the period beginning in 2017. The documents collected are from public sources and they deal with land use planning issues in Bogotá. First, documents by state agencies available online were retrieved from their web pages. Second, documents were collected in public archives of the state institutions in Bogotá. Third, documents originally public but currently not publicly available were collected in private archives of particular interviewees. We narrowed down the full body of research material used in this article, as described below.

We draw on 39 out of the 118 documents collected, including documents in three categories: scientific and technical reports; administrative and policy documents including legal decrees; and official statistics published by the city administration of Bogotá. These documents were retrieved from physical archives in Bogotá, and through

official and institutional web pages. We carried out a qualitative content analysis of the materials to identify the socio-ecological transformations in land use issues and forms of social organization in rural Bogotá. Although the topics of the documents included urban planning and nature broadly, the selection criteria for the 39 documents used here was that they are explicitly related to rural issues in the Capital District of Bogotá. The documents were organized using ATLAS.ti software. In addition, these documents were later complemented with a literature review on empirical research related to our case study area to provide a potentially different perspective that could be compared with and contrasted to our findings in the documents.

In addition, in order to triangulating the information found in the documents and research literature, and with the purpose of identifying territorial strategies and practices mobilized by the *campesinos*, we relied on interviews, visits to the field, and participant observation. The fieldwork was conducted from late 2017 to early 2018. It consisted of, first, interviews with planners, experts, practitioners and local activists working on land use planning and development of rural areas of the city, and second, participant observations in events dealing with the issues related to the planning process and impacts of urbanization in rural Bogotá. We used the strategy of locating key informants who could guide us to the topics we were focusing on. The key informants were planners, practitioners and social leaders and activists. For the larger project, the first author carried out a total of 32 thematic and unstructured interviews. In addition to the interviews with individuals, there were a number of focus group interviews. Again, although the topics of the interviews broadly included urban planning and nature, the subject of rural and non-urban developed areas was covered as a specific topic. For this article, when analyzing the findings in the interviews, we focused on the *campesino* communities' responses to the impacts of urbanization. Therefore, we narrowed the total of 32 interviews down to 8 interviews used for this article: 2 with planners, 3 with practitioners, and 3 with social activists. The names and the detailed positions of the individuals are not disclosed in order to guarantee personal and community privacy. The interview notes were qualitatively analyzed coding the mentions of urbanization, livelihoods and ways to deal with the transforming landscape.

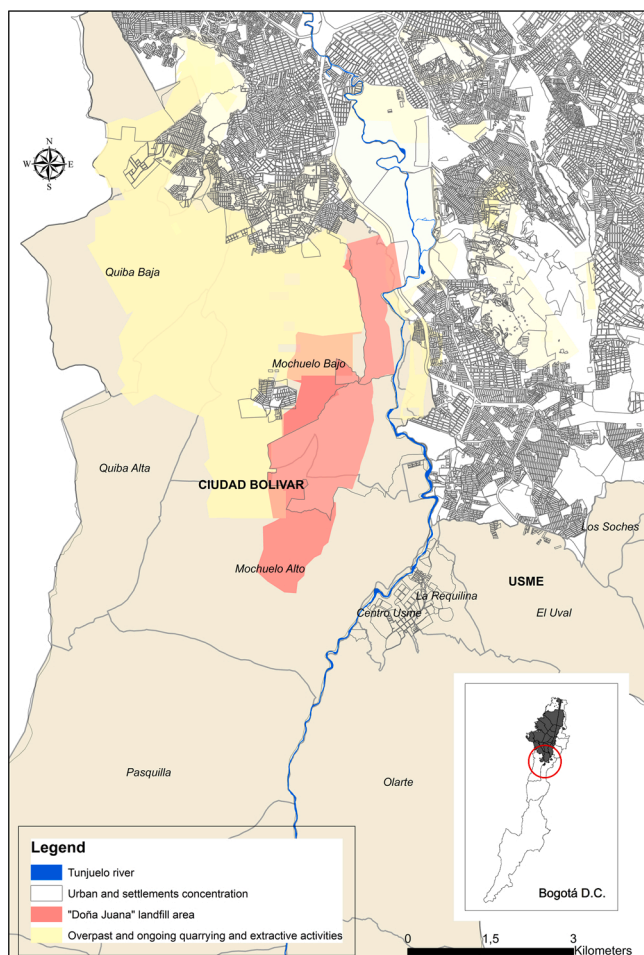
There were also visits to the field with the intention of observing the physical transformations of the landscape in the study area. A second purpose of the visits was participant observation. The first author visited three times the locations where the *campesinos* live (twice in *Usme* and once in *Ciudad Bolívar*) to take part in and observe their activities and to meet with local social leaders to discuss their practices and strategies of dealing with the pressures of urbanization. The form of these discussions was free, with no detailed questions prepared in advance. The data collected this way was used to complement the information from the documents and the interviews. In *Usme*, the participant observation activities included one community workshop and one social and cultural happening. In *Ciudad Bolívar*, a guided tour was conducted through the urban-rural fringe, led by a local practitioner. During the tour impacts of urbanization were discussed, and there was also time to talk with the rural inhabitants. The observations were recorded in a field diary. Finally, inputs from previous professional experiences of the first author in the case-study area were used to contextualize the findings (cf. Gomez et al., 2017).

4. The rural within the city in Bogotá

4.1. Land use issues

The Land-Use Master Plan of Bogotá (in Spanish: *Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial*, hereafter, POT²) identifies three types of land: urban

² We favor here the acronym in Spanish because this is how it is best known locally.



Map 1. Case-study area in Bogotá (Elaboration: First author).



Image 1. Urban rural fringes in south Bogotá: Left: Ciudad Bolívar; right: Usme. (Photo credit: First author).

(urbano), rural (*rural*), and planned urban expansion (*suelo de expansión urbana*). The Capital District's total surface area of 1635 km² is comprised of 23 % urban, 2% planned urban expansion, and 75 % rural areas (Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá, 2004; Secretaría Distrital de Planeación -SDP, 2017). About 70 % of the rural land is constituted of páramo ecosystems (high Andean moors and wetlands), 9% of high Andean forest and scrub, <2% of forest plantations, 16 % of pastures and 3% of crops (Secretaría Distrital de Ambiente, n.d.). There are also protected areas (about 734 km²), some of them legally protected as part of the so-called "Main Ecological Structure" (*Estructura Ecológica Principal*, henceforth MES) of Bogotá. Most of the protected areas have been created to safeguard biodiversity and water supply for the city-region.

Rural Bogotá embraces different territorialities including those of the farmers, small agricultural entrepreneurs, industrial flower farmers, and recognized indigenous communities such as the *Muiscas*. The main economic and productive activities are agriculture, livestock husbandry, rural tourism, social, cultural and handicraft activities and trade. The Rural Census of Bogotá (Secretaría de Desarrollo Económico, 2015) states that there are 4221 housing units (*viviendas*) in rural areas of the Capital District, with a total of 4353 households (*hogares*) and 16,787 people (3.9 persons per household); this is about 0.22 % of the total population of Bogotá. Our study areas, the localities of *Usme* and *Ciudad Bolívar*, have the highest rural population percentage in the Capital District (about 62 % from the total share of rural population). About 49 % of the Capital District's rural properties (*finca* or *predio rural* in Spanish) are owned by the residents themselves while the other half is divided between usufruct, lease, sharecropping, and, in a few cases, *de facto* possession (Secretaría de Desarrollo Económico op cit.).

Our focus of research is on a transition strip between the rural area and urban consolidation belonging to the *Tunjuelo* River watershed (See Map 1). In contrast to the northern, eastern and western urban-rural fringes of the city, the southern border is the principal setting for agricultural settlements (Gomez et al., 2017, 121). Likewise, the upstream basin of the *Tunjuelo* is closely connected to the *Sumapaz* region, which has a long tradition of agrarian struggles (cf. Fajardo et al., 1975; Marulanda-Álvarez, 1991; Londoño-Botero, 2011) and where high mountains harbor part of the largest continuous area of páramo ecosystem in the world and a national park.

Simultaneously, this area presents the most critical environmental conflicts in the city region related to the development of urban infrastructure (social housing projects, dams for water supply, roads, and logistics infrastructure), the extraction of sand and gravel, and waste

disposal in landfills and dumps. The underlying reasons for these conflicts include historical processes of socio-spatial segregation and a problematic set of decisions related to urban planning. Broadly, the urban growth towards the south of Bogotá (which historically has been a marginalized area) has shown how land use is driven by political and economic interests where the rural areas are considered insignificant, only existing to support and give way to efforts to build a "modern city" (cf. Jaramillo, 1992; Zambrano, 2004, 2007). In this development model, rural areas provide commons and resources such as water and food, recreational spaces, as well as materials to build the city such as limestone, sand, clay, or gravel (Secretaría Distrital de Ambiente and Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2007; Sánchez-Calderón, 2018).

Since the establishment of the current Colombian National Constitution in 1991, environmental imperatives have been increasingly included in the urban agenda, associated with an expanding space for participatory practices in urban planning. Social movements in marginalized areas have banded together in political mobilization for the right to the urban territory (Quimbayo Ruiz, 2018) resulting in the inclusion of most of their claims in policy agendas. This has also been possible through the modernization of urban planning practices, mainly after the first POT was issued in 2000. The consequent introduction of ecological principles of urban-rural sustainability has acknowledged the relevance of rural areas for nature and water resource conservation (Table 1).

Nevertheless, the development of the regulatory framework has had mixed outcomes, particularly in relation to law enforcement. Nature conservation measures, including the creation of protected areas, paradoxically have ignored the social dynamics of the inhabitants and landowners in the rural areas. This omission has created conflicts between state action, land-use, and protection of biodiversity and water resources. Likewise, ambiguous ecological protection measures applied in isolated conservation areas have created paper parks, which are clear on official maps but not effectively existing on the ground. Thus, the strategy of raising nature conservation issues relating to the formal planning process through the political system as interpreted by the farming communities has brought about mixed results (Comunidad Rural de Usme, 2018).

Other regulations were also declared through the POT to develop high impact activities such as quarrying in areas referred to as Mining-Industrial Parks (*Parques Minero-Industriales-PMI*). Despite being recognized as part of the MES, the mountains of southern Bogotá remain unprotected from the impacts of quarrying. This affects the daily lives of

Table 1
Legal regulations regarding rural Bogotá. Elaboration for this research based on Martínez Sierra (2010) as cited in Pérez-Martínez et al (2011).

Period	Legal regulation	Purpose
1986–1990	District Accord 9 of 1986	Political-administrative act recognizing <i>Sumapaz</i> as part of the Bogotá's District.
1990–1995	District Accord 6 of 1990	Statute for the Land Use Planning of the Special District of Bogotá. This specified the land use for agricultural uses.
	District Accord 9 of 1990	The Technical Administrative Department of the Environment was created. This institution regulates rural and farming activities.
1995–1997	Decree 482 (1996)	The District Agrarian System (<i>Sistema Agropecuario Distrital</i> SISADI) was created in addition to Local Technical Assistance Units (ULATAS).
	District Decree 619 of 2000	The Land Use Master Plan for the Capital District was adopted (POT).
1997–2004	District Decree 463 of 2003	The POT was first revised.
	District Decree 190 of 2004	The provisions contained in the District Decrees 619 of 2000 and 469 of 2003 were compiled. This reaffirmed the current POT and established guidelines for land use planning for rural areas through specific instruments (<i>Piezas rurales</i>).
	Accord 257 of 2006	Basic norms on the structure, organization and operation of the administrative organizations of Bogotá, Capital District, were dictated.
2004–2008	Decree 327 of 2007	The Public Policy of Rurality of the Capital District was adopted.
	Decree 234 of 2008	The establishment of the Local Units of Local Development (ULDER). The election procedure for these unites was established for the delegates from social organizations and rural population sectors.
2008–2018	Decree 42 of 2010	The Sustainable Management Plan for Rural Development (PGDR) was adopted.
	District Decree 435 2015	The Rural Planning Unit (<i>Unidad de Planeamiento Rural</i> -UPR) for regulation of Northern Bogotá's rural area was adopted.
	District Decree 552 2015	The UPR for the regulation of <i>Sumapaz</i> area was adopted.
	District Decree 553 2015	The UPR for the regulation of <i>Río Blanco</i> area was adopted.

the residents most notably in the urban neighborhoods at the urban-rural fringe. First, there is a lack of areas for recreation, and, second, quarrying activities affect the air quality and expose the inhabitants, children especially, to chronic respiratory diseases (Ordoñez et al., 2013). Furthermore, since the 1950s, the *Tunjuelo* River at its mid-course has suffered massive and irreparable impacts due to open pits for gravel extraction. Such impacts have affected the natural dynamics of the river and have been linked to serious flooding events affecting the surrounding poor neighborhoods, most of which were former settlements of low-income workers (Sánchez 2018). Despite attempts to change the land-use regulations regarding the PMI, the environmental damage has not been repaired.

Likewise, in the late 1980s, the District's landfill *Doña Juana* was located in the areas of *Mochuelo Bajo* and *Mochuelo Alto* in *Ciudad Bolívar* upon the justification that the location had a favorable cost-benefit ratio for transportation. Moreover, as one interviewed practitioner stated, it was also perceived as an appropriate location because officially "no one lived there". This, however, was counterfactual because several farming communities had settled in the area with legal land titles (Quintero, 2016). These communities live there to this day, suffering the impacts of the landfill that receives 6000 tons of waste per day. The landfill should be operated using technologies adapted to the geotechnical conditions of

the site to meet minimum conditions of stability and safety (cf. Preciado et al., 2005). This, however, is not the case.

Failures in meeting these conditions can have serious outcomes, as exemplified by the three landslides officially registered in 1997, 2015 and 2020. The first of these two is considered as one of the worst environmental disasters in the recent history of Bogotá (Molano Camargo, 2019). A collective group on behalf of the communities affected in rural and urban areas sued the state for the damages and impacts caused by a landslide of about 1.2 million tons of waste which affected the environment and human health even beyond the landfill in the surrounding six localities of south Bogotá. A court approved the demand in 2012, and the City District had to financially compensate to about 600,000 pre-registered affected people, but after more than 20 years since the disaster, the compensation process is only beginning. In the third major event, in late April 2020 (amid the covid19 pandemic sanitary emergency), the waste landslide was around 80,000 tons. The closure of the landfill that has been demanded by the neighboring communities continues to be disputed between the communities, authorities and private contractors. At the same time, the authorities have sanctioned fines on the contractors following several operational failures at the landfill³, yet a concrete solution towards a transition to a different waste management system has not been achieved (see Gallini 2016). In fact, there is constant resistance to waste disposal operations from the inhabitants in the peri-urban neighborhoods, peasant and farming communities, who have claimed several times for definitive closure of the landfill after more than three decades of living and working under a situation of "environmental suffering" (Ortiz Díaz, 2019).

Finally, the promotion of formal housing and urban planning projects in the POT such as *Operación Nuevo Usme* generated additional tensions (Comunidad Rural de Usme, 2018). The first set of buildings of this housing operation known as *Ciudadela Nuevo Usme* were ready in the late 2000s and are blocks of eight floors that rise in the middle of crop fields and country houses surrounding the old town (*pueblo*) of *Usme*. The housing operation was planned to be larger, but in 2007 a unique archaeological finding located in the point known as *Hacienda El Carmen* stopped some of the original intentions. The finding is an ancient *Muisca* cemetery, claimed by local campesino and environmental activists (*Mesa Usme*) as proof of the *Muisca*'s ancestral link to the territory. The archeological finding has been used in the activists' arguments opposing any further urbanization development, and after many years of social struggle, in 2020 the District's administration approved the creation of an archeological park⁴.

Most of the housing projects were promoted as a plan to build government subsidized homes for people who had been forced to flee from the countryside or other towns because of the Colombian internal armed conflict. However, this housing scheme has been problematic for the beneficiaries because it segregates these refugees from the wealthiest zones of the city, and the housing conditions have not been optimal for living (e.g., small flats are not suitable for the residents with their former rural livelihoods). For the *campesinos* of *Usme*, the arrival of the newcomers has meant that the city is conquering their land and creating new social tensions in the territory. Some of the *campesino* leaders have joined the *Nuevo Usme* community leaders who have raised their voices because of the failed promises by the city administration for suitable housing and the right to the city, but with little effect (Vargas Mariño, 2015).

³ "Superservicios sancionó con millonaria multa al operador del relleno sanitario Doña Juana". *Revista Catorce6* <https://www.catorce6.com/actualidad-ambiental/18685-superservicios-sancionon-con-millonaria-multa-al-operador-d-el-relleno-sanitario-dona-juana> (Last retrieved: May 25 2020).

⁴ "Usme por fin tendrá su parque arqueológico". *El Tiempo*: <https://www.eltiempo.com/bogota/bogota-usme-por-fin-tendra-su-parque-arqueologico-529588> (Last retrieved: August 19 2020).

4.2. How the campesinos organize

In the rural lands, the POT recognizes rural settlements as *centros poblados rurales*, which are small nucleated rural settlements that combine housing and services (public, social, welfare, administrative, recreational and cultural) for the scattered population of the surrounding *veredas* (the smallest administrative sub-unit in the municipality). These settlements are the heart of rural political life. In our focus area there are the following *veredas* facing urban expansion: in the *Usme* area *Uval*, *La Requilina*, *Corinto*, *Soches* and *Agualinda-Chiguaza*, and in the *Ciudad Bolívar* area *Mochuelo Alto* and *Mochuelo Bajo*, *Quiba Baja*, *Quiba Alta*, and *Pasquilla*. In the *veredas*, the basic form of organization is the Community Action Board (*Junta de Acción Comunal-JAC* or, henceforth, *Junta*; see Fig. 1). The *Junta* is governed by the national law 743 from 2002, which declares the following:

“The *Junta de acción comunal* is a civic, social and community organization of social management, non-profit, of solidary nature, with a legal status and its own assets, and voluntarily integrated by the residents of a place joining efforts and resources to seek integral and sustainable development based on the exercise of participatory democracy” (Congreso de Colombia, 2002: Article 8a).

According to the law, each *Junta* should establish statutes such as denomination, objectives, affiliates, agencies, dignitaries and their form of election, economic, fiscal and disciplinary regimes. However, the *Junta* is not the only organizational body or institution existing in the area. There are other types of *Juntas* related to the administration of rural community aqueducts (*acueductos veredales*). Likewise, there are local NGOs, and legally constituted participatory spaces (*instancias de participación* or local forums) where individuals and organizations in the community can converge for specific and common concerns. These forms of organization have been used by community members in peri-urban areas in Bogotá to advocate the *campesino* way of life. Although this could be a general frame to explain local social organization, the actual process in our case study is far more complex, as our empirical findings will show. Thus, we will present some examples that illustrate how this socio-political organization has incrementally been progressing to advocate the *campesino* way of life.

One of the most remarkable examples is the creation of an agropark (*Agroparque*) in the *vereda* of *Los Soches* in *Usme*. The idea of the agropark is based on a territorial strategy to contend with urban expansion (*estrategia de borde*). The park was born after the District Accord Number 6 was issued in 1990 establishing an urban expansion zone in the area. The main leader of the development of the agropark has been Belisario

Villalba, a locally well-known peasant and environmental activist in Bogotá. In the late 1990s, after many struggles, even facing harassment and persecution and attempts of assassination, Villalba and his community achieved the right to stay in their *vereda* and this was acknowledged by the City Council and District agencies, in particular the Environmental Office (nowadays *Secretaría Distrital de Ambiente*). At the time of issuing the first POT in 2000, the area was excluded from the urban expansion areas and acquired a protected area status (as *Agroparque*). In 2002, Villalba and his community founded their own legal organization called *Corporación Eclipse*. Since then, they have been agroecological producers, and have engaged in ecotourism and rural tourism activities. In so doing, the people at *Los Soches* have been mobilizing their identity and way of life as *campesinos*, inherited from their ancestors and bequeathed to their children. Such an identity is a strong component of community social commitment, as Villalba has stated in a recent interview made by Ortiz and Quiroga (2018), 61–64):

“It feels rewarding to see how, from *Los Soches*, things are organized and spreading around, especially the idea of defending the territory. Now, when the urban expansion arrives at the *veredas Uval*, *La Requilina*, and even *Olarte*, people no longer get scared but start to defend the area and work together. At this moment we already have the regional proposal of the southern edge [the proposal to contain urban expansion: *propuesta regional del borde sur*]. So, this makes me happy because after going through so many trials and tribulations, because this project caused me to shed many tears, one sees fruits and the *campesinos* are not so far apart, and they [people outside the community] no longer say ‘no’ to everything.”⁵

Local leaders like Villalba have been influential in mobilizing the *campesinos* in south Bogotá. The organized community has often tried to “invite” and persuade state-institutions to work with them, rather than refusing potential collaboration between the parties, although not forgetting the constant tension in how the state has historically considered the rural areas. In addition, after the District’s Public Policy of Rurality was issued in 2007, formal mechanisms and participation venues were strengthened resulting in interaction and joint work between local populations and representatives of state agencies or local government to improve conditions in these areas. For instance, this was manifest in the work of local organizations in local units and committees for planning and development (i.e., local unit: ULDER, *Consejos de Planeación Local*, and *Concejos Ambientales Locales*) jointly with the local councils and organizations. Another example in organizational terms, also in *Usme*, has been the establishment of the participation space called “*Mesa de concertación borde urbano rural*” (“Urban-rural fringe dialogue roundtable”) or *Mesa de Concertación*, which has been a meeting point led by organized communities to establish agreements and encourage action from state institutions, engaging further participation by other spaces established by the Rurality Policy. The roundtable emerged more than 15 years ago as a response to urban expansion, especially formal housing and urban planning projects such as *Operación Nuevo Usme* but it has managed to promote additional tools for local land-use planning.

Moreover, we can identify *campesino* organizations engaged in rural tourism to promote the exchange of practices between concerned communities (rural and urban), as well as strategies using sustainable approaches such as the production of vegetables and dairy products, and the improvement of water resource use, and land-cover and stream protection through rural aqueducts (cf. Gomez et al., 2017; Comunidad Rural de Usme, 2018; van der Hammen et al., 2018). Such activities have been the product of constant demands from local communities to state agencies to channel technical and social support, and to build connections with universities, research centers, and other stakeholders (see Table 2). This is happening especially in the *Pasquilla* area, but the situation is much harder in other areas because of the influence of high impact activities such as the “*Doña Juana*” landfill, or quarrying

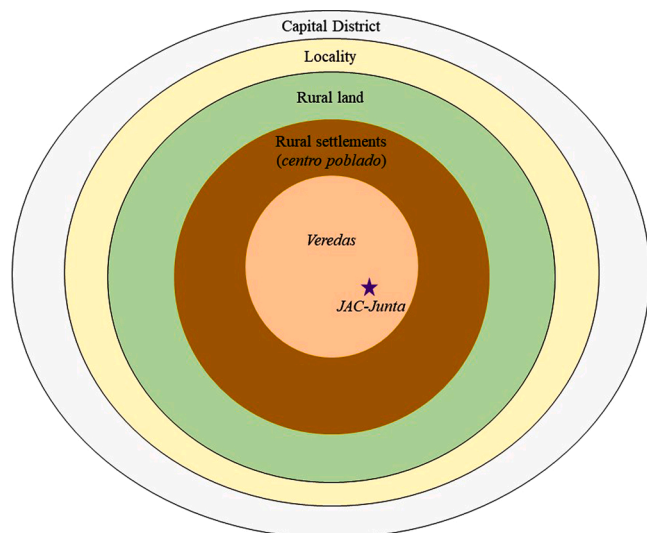


Fig. 1. Political and administrative nesting of the *Junta* in the *veredas* of south Bogotá.

⁵ Our translation. The original source is in Spanish.

Table 2
Actors present in *Usme* and *Ciudad Bolívar*. Adapted from: Pérez-Martínez et al., 2011, 2014; Hernández Gómez and Rojas Robles, 2015.

Type of actor	Level of action	Actor examples	Role
Community organization	Local	JAC, and committee members in relation with local and District authorities	Setting in a common agreement about the local actions inside the community
Organization for attending community services	Local	JAC, specific committees on water management (<i>acueducto veredal</i>), among others	Setting the rules of managing community commons
Educational Institutions	Local, District, National	District's public schools (<i>Instituciones Educativas Distritales-IED</i>), Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) shelters, National Training Service of Colombia (SENA)	Mainly of public nature. These institutions besides providing basic rights like education and social care also can be engaged with other social and cultural activities.
Government Institutions	District, local	City and local councils (<i>Alcaldía Mayor y Alcaldías locales</i>)	Key role in setting and enforcing the land-use normative regime
State Agencies and public-private corporations on planning, rural technical assistance, environmental authorities, social welfare, and housing	District, Regional, National	District agencies (i.e. Environmental and Economic Development Offices, and District's Botanical Garden), regional environmental agency (CAR); Corpoica, Ministry of the Environment, among others	Key role in setting and enforcing the land-use normative regime targeted on environmental and rural affairs
Local Organizations, and local NGOs	Local	Community organizations, youth environmental culture and peasant community	Supporting social and cultural community activities
NGOs	District, National	Focused on environmental and human rights, education and culture	Developing social, humanitarian or charity activities with local inhabitants
Small-scale agriculture and livestock producers	Local	Producer associations	Leading the local agricultural production
Promoters of rural tourism	Local	Local entrepreneurship organizations	Developing local potential for rural tourism and environmental education for locals and visitors
Universities and research centers	Local, District, National	For example: Universidad Nacional de Colombia;	Bringing technical and scientific assistance to local productive and

Table 2 (continued)

Type of actor	Level of action	Actor examples	Role
		Universidad Distrital, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Universidad Minuto de Dios, Uniagraria, Universidad de La Salle, Universidad de Cundinamarca	agroecological initiatives
Local and political leaders	Local, District	Community representatives and local politicians	Mainstreaming local concerns to the District's political agenda
Local traders	Local	Trade such as small shops, restaurants, among others	Offering local services and amenities
Transport	Local	Local transportation associations (for products to supply food retailers in the city)	Offering transport and commuting services inside the area and to the city, and supplying markets
Agriculture and extractive industries	Local	Productive associations, and private producers: quarrying, or agriculture and milk producers	Production of agricultural and building-sector goods, and provision of local jobs

activities (Hernández Gómez and Rojas Robles, 2015).

It can be said that in the case-study area there is a regular presence of state authorities at different levels (district, regional and national, in Table 2). However, according to the interviews analyzed for this article the efficiency of state-agencies has been insufficient and their performance depends on the political agenda of the local/regional government in office.

5. Community strategies and practices in *Usme* and *Ciudad Bolívar*

Based on the analysis of the documents, interviews, and recorded participant observations, our data shows that *campesino* communities have been organizing and mobilizing using several strategies to cope with the urban expansion. We can typify two forms of strategies that the *campesinos* employ to reterritorialize their environments. The first of them is more focused on creating impacts through social-political processes, the second on executing more material impacts. The strategies of the *campesinos*, their related practices and outcomes of the strategies and practices are synthesized in Table 3.

We argue that each of the strategies has been mobilized through situated knowledge practices, and as a consequence they draw on environmental imperatives to agitate political action. This situated knowledge can be considered to be local expert knowledge which interacts with ecology and law through the relationships that the *campesinos* have been developing with actors from the national, district and local levels, and with the landscape the *campesinos* construct and live in. In the following part of this section, we provide details of each strategy and their impacts on the processes of deterritorialization in the urban-rural fringes of south Bogotá.

5.1. Political mobilization

The first form of the strategies employed by the *campesinos* occurs through social-political processes. In previous parts of this article, we

Table 3
Community strategies in the urban-rural fringes of southern Bogotá.

Strategy	Specific Practices	Outcomes
Political Mobilization	Acts of resistance in everyday life against high impact activities such as landfills or quarrying	Strengthened legitimacy of land ownership claims
	Interlocution with state and government agencies (“knocking on doors”)	Reallocation of public resources targeting rural technical assistance (although intermittent)
	Interlocution with academia and professionals to receive technical assistance	Inclusion (although still limited) of rural and environmental interests in the urban governance agenda
Landscape management	Contentious collective actions such as using existing legal tools and joining urban planning policy processes	Issuing of laws and regulations on rural issues at District level
	Transition to more ecologically sound farming production and land-use practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agroecological production and sustainable livestock husbandry • Rural tourism to promote the exchange of practices among concerned communities (rural and urban) • Improvement of water resource use, land-cover and streams protection through rural aqueducts 	Improvement of local environmental conditions in some of the rural properties Strengthening of community ties through agroecological practices Legitimization of political strategies through concrete and functional land-use practices

referred to some acts of resistance in everyday life against high impact activities, such as the *Doña Juana* landfill, the quarrying extraction fronts in the urban frontier of the *Tunjuelo* River watershed, or housing projects such as *Nuevo Usme*. However, we must understand these acts of resistance as a part of a larger set of practices of a repertoire of political mobilization. They have some similarities to the means of action of social movements focusing on Bogotá’s urban nature (Quimbayo Ruiz, 2018: 537), and although they are not exactly the same, some overlap can be identified as revealed by our research.

First, the *campesinos* have been mobilizing their political strategies through institutional channels. As direct action, this consists of a concrete practice of approaching the authorities personally and requesting them to make changes in the urbanization policies. We call the practice here “knocking on doors”. The *campesinos* also collectively use the available legal mechanisms enabling them to reclaim their land use rights. Based on the definition of the situated knowledge above, we could understand the knowledge that the *campesinos* have been accumulating on the legal mechanisms and tools, as part of situated knowledge they are possessing. This is because they only become knowledgeable of these legal mechanisms through their presence in the landscape and in the communities; the *campesinos* have not studied or been educated on issues of law. The legal mechanisms also only make sense to them through the specific situations in which they are related to the tangible and material transformations in the landscapes which the *campesinos* inhabit.

Second, there have been successful bottom-up social and political claims that have helped rural issues reach the development agenda of the Capital District. This has enabled financial resources to be channeled to help engage local community leaders with state-led or community projects, or even hiring them as staff at governmental institutions mostly in the environmental sector and at different levels of the state administration. Furthermore, this has allowed technical assistance for the promotion and construction of infrastructure for rural production and

social and environmental improvements. This technical assistance by the administrative bodies to the *campesino* communities has been operationalized and reshaped through the utilization of situated knowledge on traditional agricultural techniques deployed by the *campesinos*.

According to our research materials, *campesino* leaders value the work done for their territory through collective actions and by community organizations. However, the strategies by the *campesinos* have not always been successful. The *campesino* communities have had a role in how the environmental narrative was introduced into urban planning in Bogotá. In the late 1990s when the national law on land use planning (*ley de ordenamiento territorial*) was issued, the planners did not understand how to manage the rural areas. When those areas were included in the first POT in 2000, environmental issues were considered, although not from the outset. According to our research materials, environmental issues came into planning from the rural and farming organizations making their demands. As a result of these demands and the development of the POT, the formulation and issuing of the Public Policy for Rurality of The Capital District was one of the main success stories of this development. This also led to a stronger interlocution with academia and professionals, for the *campesinos* to receive technical assistance. However, according to the *campesino* community leaders, the public policy targeting the rurality has mostly failed in its implementation. During field visits it was noticed that people have been discontented with being used by the state agencies and NGOs who have favored development projects instead of the communities. It seems that this has created problematic relationships between the state agencies and NGOs on one hand, and communities involved in the mobilization of resources, efforts, and projects to improve the social conditions of the rural people and their landscape, on the other.

5.2. Landscape management

A different kind of strategic action by the *campesino* communities can be typified, which is more material and less focused on having social impacts than the political action presented above: landscape management. This strategy also relies on situated knowledge practices. There are productive activities promoting more ecologically aware practices in the *campesinos’* households, appealing to the *campesino* way of life. Agricultural production initiatives such as agroecological production farms and sustainable livestock husbandry, agroecological rural tourism, and fair-trade agricultural products have all been promoted in projects between communities and state-led agencies, or between communities, universities and research centers. This was observed during the field visits and in meetings with the *campesino* social leaders. Although many of these initiatives are marginal and face challenges due to limitations in funding or administrative or legal restrictions, they have often led to an exchange of sustainable practices among concerned rural and urban communities.

The *campesinos* have also developed strategies to use and manage the landscape which they are part of. The existing agroecological activities have been supported by university researchers and occasionally by state programs (Ortiz et al., 2019). Moreover, in recent years a state-supported initiative called *Mercados Campesinos* (Peasant Markets) has been acting as a platform to bring *campesinos’* products to urban markets in Bogotá although with mixed results. Therefore, some *campesino* communities have relied on autonomous initiatives of seed exchange (Hoinle and Castro, 2019). The *campesino* farmers have tried to intensify their production systems to use the reduced areas available for agriculture more efficiently (Image 2). Another way forward is to try to show the importance of agroecological principles in bringing about both productive and sustainability benefits. Moreover, the farmers are relatively knowledgeable about the importance of aspects of biodiversity for their everyday lives. According to a recent research they use up to 231 species of native plants, mostly for medicine, while other major uses are for food and fiber (Pérez and Matiz-Guerra, 2017, 72). This kind of



Image 2. Agricultural area in Pasquilla, locality of Ciudad Bolívar (Photo credit: First author).

ecological information is relevant for the *campesinos* and it has been used by them to strengthen their claims to reterritorialize their living space against urbanization.

Gomez et al. (2017) recount joint action by representatives of local communities and municipal (*Secretaría Distrital de Ambiente*) and national level (*Alexander von Humboldt Institute*) institutions in *Usme* and *Ciudad Bolívar* in 2014. These actors have jointly defined comprehensive landscape management systems that combine means of social organization with legal instruments, though the latter have not yet been legally enforced. The proposed solutions have ranged from protected farming landscapes (based on Category V of the International Union for Conservation of Nature) to “agropolitan” parks (*Agroparques*) (included in the Rural Public Policy). Most of these solutions were included in land-use plans for urban expansion (e.g., *propuesta regional del borde sur*) developed by the *campesino* communities themselves, and formally presented to the Capital District authorities (*Comunidad Rural de Usme*, 2018). Among these landscape strategies, the role of the rural aqueducts (*acueductos rurales*) has been fundamental for the water supply of the communities (van der Hammen et al., 2018), and they have facilitated the emergence of social organizations among farmers and rural producers for local water use and management according to their needs and means of life (Arrieta, 2019). It is worth noting that although not always recognized, *campesino* women (*campesinas*) have had a central role in these activities (Liberato Táutiva, 2019). Again, situated knowledge combining ecology and law has been a vehicle to agitating political action as a strategy to reterritorialize the *territorio de borde*.

6. Discussion

Teresa Caldeira’s (2017) concept of auto-construction emphasizes the agency of the people who are peripheral in relation to the formal systems of urban planning, politics and development. While auto-construction originally refers to the construction of urban space by the peripheral inhabitants themselves, we would like to see auto-construction as reterritorialization, and including more broadly the agency of the rural inhabitants in constructing and reconstructing the spaces and landscapes which they inhabit within the expanding urban areas. Applied to the urban-rural fringe (*territorio de borde*) of south Bogotá, we see that the strategies and practices of the *campesinos* are reterritorializing the spaces impacted by the expanding urban development. This reterritorialization process should not be understood only as construction of their own physical environments but rather as reconstruction of their own rural ways of life in the urbanizing frontier

of the city. Precisely, among community leaders in *Usme* there is a growing understanding that the rural is “another way for being in a city” (Gomez et al., 2017). Negative impacts of urbanization are being contested by *campesino* action to subvert an ideology that promotes unavoidable desirability of city life (cf. Angelo and Wachsmuth, 2015). *Campesino* communities perceive this ideology as pushed by planners and other land-use stakeholders who view rural spaces ambivalently in their planning practices. Such ideology is reflected in relocating undesired aspects (dumps and quarries) of city life away from the central urban areas, or conservation of water reserves or food provision for urbanites, without considering the material and symbolic conditions which sustain such spaces and the *campesinado*.

Our findings confirm that peripheral populations in Bogotá construct their own space by engaging in territorial strategies. The strategies and the respective practices that were identified coincide with findings from previous work related to rural areas in Bogotá (Pérez-Martínez et al., 2011; Vargas Mariño, 2015; Arrieta, 2019). Our case-study in *Usme* and *Ciudad Bolívar* emphasizes that both the strategies and the practices of the *campesinos* are based on situated knowledge which interacts with environmental discourse and involves an incremental development of expert knowledge on ecology and land-use law from the *campesino* communities bottom-up. This means that the *campesinos*’ experiences on their traditional means of life are combined with external influences and expertise in order to sustain the everyday life in their rural properties and households despite urban growth. As a dialogical cycle of production of knowledge and reterritorialization, the process of reterritorialization is in turn producing particular forms of situated knowledge of nature in rural Bogotá.

Although the *campesino* identity is a crucial feature of the rural dwellers’ strategies to maintain their land and livelihoods, this is just one part of the story. Throughout their struggle to deal with urban growth, they have performed reterritorializing actions mobilizing the *campesino* way of life but adding some “urbanite” practices, even finding solidarity among inhabitants of peripheral city neighborhoods who are also impacted by the effects of unequal urbanization. Considering that the most severe impacts of urbanization in the Capital District impact their territory, the organized *campesinos* attempt to find incremental and creative land-use solutions in their everyday life and try to engage state-agencies or other stakeholders from the city such as universities, research centers or other concerned social actors. Indeed, this implies the creation of a set of public-private networking initiatives for local governance, similarly to other places in Latin America (cf. Méndez-Lemus et al., 2017). This action pattern is clearly visible in the

political mobilization and landscape management strategies described in the previous section. Our results also coincided with Marcela Arrieta's ethnography on *Usme's* rural aqueducts (Arrieta, 2019) that power is not only legitimated by hegemonic expert knowledge represented by state institutions and legislation. Rather, and following Tilly (1999), the legitimacy of knowledge and law is co-created by communities confronting the institutions that represent state power.

Therefore, the strategies and practices identified in our case study are not only emerging locally but are also a product of collaborative actions with state or other external agencies, temporary as they might be. Similarly, Osorio Ardila (2020) suggests that the social, political, and technical networks related to environmental protection in the northern urban fringe of Bogotá are embedded in controversies over nature and the production of ecological realities. Notably, however, some of the *campesinos* we met in Bogotá's urban-rural fringe, especially in *Usme*, were less in conflict against the state compared to other *campesino* leaders and communities in *Mochuelo Alto (Ciudad Bolívar)* or in other parts of the Bogotá-region such as those living in the areas of *Cruz Verde* and *Sumapaz*. This situation was confirmed by the interviews with practitioners, former planners, local activists, the participant observations in the field, and through former projects where the first author of this article has engaged with these types of initiatives (Gomez et al., 2017). Communities in *Cruz Verde* and *Sumapaz* are more politically outspoken and explicitly struggling towards food sovereignty as a political *leitmotif*. Some nature conservation measures especially in *Sumapaz* have led to conflicts between state action, land-use, and protection of biodiversity and water resources ignoring the social dynamics of the inhabitants and landowners. Moreover, military interventions and securitization in the frame of the Colombian internal political conflict have also been deployed to justify developmentalist and extractive interventions (Peña, 2016).

It seems that sustainability policies addressing rural issues are not working. Most rural areas of the Capital District, despite being legally recognized as areas for farming activities and ecological protection, have been considered by urban planners and stakeholders in the real estate sector as areas for urban expansion, or they have been employed to allocate extractive and waste disposal activities away from the city core. In the most extreme cases, rural areas and inhabitants have been ignored by planners who have failed to recognize them as established communities with their established ways of life and local economies. However, as this research has shown, some of these communities have managed to overcome this through joint action with state institutions (especially environmental authorities) when needed. In the meantime, the *campesinos* are caught between advocating their way of life, bringing in all the possible allies, and trying to harmonize things with the city. After all, the city of Bogotá has been constructed from rural areas through its history.

7. Conclusion

At the beginning of this article, we posed the question: what happens when peasants do not migrate to the city but, rather, the city expands to their areas of residence. To address this question, we have explored the different ways in which the *campesinos* living within the administrative city limits of Bogotá seek to cope with the urban expansion towards the rural spaces they inhabit. We have also investigated the context of urbanization that concretely includes the actions of administrators, planners, and private developers. While urbanization is a large-scale global phenomenon with multiple political-economic mechanisms driving it, these are the actors who create the tangible conditions locally against which the *campesinos* implement the strategies and practices that help them to keep up with the changing physical and social environment. The strategies and practices that we have identified suggest that the urban expansion into rural spaces and over the places that are inhabited by rural populations leads to diverse forms of action by the populations. Given the importance of urbanization as a phenomenon globally, these

strategies and practices are also interesting in a broader perspective than just Bogotá.

In terms of the context for the actions of the *campesinos*, according to the findings from the research, the rural spaces in Bogotá have been deliberately used by the planning authorities and private contractors to locate activities that would be undesirable within the urbanized space, such as landfills and extractive activities. The rural spaces have also been defined as "valuable" for the city only because they have a role in water supply or housing development. Both of these development options ignore the *campesino* settlements. At the same time, urbanization-driven decisions over the land use inevitably affect the *campesino* communities and the rural landscapes. We can identify here a process of deterritorialization concerning the originally rural spaces where the *campesino* communities of Bogotá are located.

Our findings reveal that the *campesino* communities wish to maintain their *campesino* identity despite the ongoing socio-ecological transformations caused by the urbanization and the economic drivers for these transformations ranging from the local to the global scales. We have explored how the *campesinos* have been implementing reterritorialization strategies and practices that are based on situated knowledge, so as to better deal with the social and ecological impacts of urbanization. While the urbanization can be seen as a part of deterritorialization, or processes of dispossession of territory and increasing spatial injustice, in our study we have seen attempts at reterritorialization as a response to these transformations. Reterritorialization here consists of resistance strategies against urbanization, and acts of caring for the territory.

Within these attempts at reterritorialization, we have identified strategies and practices that the *campesinos* in the southern urban frontier of the city of Bogotá employ to deal with the pressures of urbanization in their everyday environments. These include actions of political mobilization related to conflicts over environmental issues, active resistance to urban development, and improved management of the physical landscape and its biodiversity. We have focused on local strategies and how the *campesino* communities have achieved institutional collaboration with the authorities. They have put forth initiatives concerning their preferred forms of land-use in the context of urbanization of the rural spaces within the city boundaries. Nevertheless, while public policies, partly following the demands by the city inhabitants, have been progressing in favor of peripheral communities and towards environmental sustainability, the interests of authorities and private developers remain a dominating factor in the development of the rural spaces for other purposes than those preferred by the *campesinos*. Despite the occasional successes to raise awareness of the importance of the *campesino* issues, most inter-institutional initiatives have failed to meet the social, economic, and environmental necessities of the *campesino* communities.

7.1. Policy recommendations

Finally, we would like to take a step towards suggesting a number of relevant options for public policies in order to mitigate the currently adverse situations in which the *campesinos* operate. Following from our findings, current land-use and urban planning tools in Bogotá would urgently need to address the realities of contemporary urbanization within the rural spaces impacted. Therefore, administrative binaries such as the city/rural would need to be rethought to manage spaces such as the *territorio de borde* in *Usme* and *Ciudad Bolívar*. Our research results show that reconstructing and documenting trajectories of environmental and land-use conflicts helps to present in detail the impacts of current and future interventions on particular urban/rural territories.

It would be truly important to assess and redefine the existing legal instruments in land-use and urban planning in Bogotá and elsewhere by taking into account the geo-historical perspectives. Although the planning instruments have been useful to a certain extent for the case of the *campesino* communities, as such they are still very limited in their ability to foresee and manage the rapid changes brought about by the

urbanization. Moreover, bureaucratic shortcomings would need to be overcome, for instance, in relation to the environmental authorities' narrow approach towards ecosystem management that currently is based on urban/rural dichotomies. At the same time, in order to better consider the rural conditions, state action should not be subordinated to sectors of private interest such as real estate, logistics, and infrastructure.

Finally, from the perspective of the *campesinos*, one additional strategy among all the *campesino* communities that was not identified within our empirical research material could be to follow a twofold agroecological process of production at the scales of the landscape and the household. Overall, the existing limitations in the planning instruments are a reminder of a call for solutions that would be more than technical, and they also point to a need for political commitment in favor of fair land-use planning practices that take into account the challenges posed by urbanization.

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CRedit authorship contribution statement

Germán A. Quimbayo Ruiz: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Writing - original draft, Funding acquisition. **Juha Kotilainen:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing. **Matti Salo:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors report no declarations of interest.

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