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Three-Dimensional Paradigm of Rural Prosperity: A Feast of Rural Embodiment, Post-Neoliberalism, and Sustainability

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Abstract: Each practical action in rural areas should be based on a comprehensive, new, and innovative theoretical paradigm. For nearly three decades, the global economic system has embraced rural entrepreneurship as a “productive” and innovative strategy in rural development in many countries, including both underdeveloped and developed countries. At present, we have large companies, which due to government development interventions, are replaced with small- and medium-sized businesses under inflexible and extreme entrepreneurialism. The purpose of this conceptual paper is to shed light on the prevailing entrepreneurship practice and discourse, criticize them, and finally introduce a new paradigm known as “paradigm of rural prosperity” (PRP). In this work, Aram Ziai’s theory of skeptical post-development was used, along with Campbell Jones and André Spicer’s critical theory of entrepreneurship and Rosenqvist’s theory of the conceptualization of rurality and rural environment called “hermeneutical realism”. The present paper attempts to base the paradigm of rural prosperity on three pillars of analysis and explanation: (a) rural embodiment, (b) neoliberalism, and (c) concept of sustainability. Although some case studies in Iran have been used as empirical evidence, this paper argues that the paradigm of rural prosperity is universal in nature and can be used in any geographical and cultural context to provide new rural development.

Keywords: entrepreneurship; rural prosperity; post-development; rurality; discourse; hermeneutical realism; rural embodiment; neoliberalism; sustainability



Citation: Shahraki, H. Three-Dimensional Paradigm of Rural Prosperity: A Feast of Rural Embodiment, Post-Neoliberalism, and Sustainability. *World* **2022**, *3*, 146–161. <https://doi.org/10.3390/world3010008>

Academic Editors: Thomas Dax, Dazhuan Ge and Andrew Copus

Received: 17 December 2021

Accepted: 25 February 2022

Published: 1 March 2022

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1. Introduction

Numerous studies conducted in the field of entrepreneurship in general and rural entrepreneurship in particular have taken a testimonial perspective toward entrepreneurship and assumed the relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth and development to be definite [1–3]. In the meantime, there are a limited number of studies with a radical or hostile approach to entrepreneurship from a discursive viewpoint on entrepreneurship [4–8]. In other words, the entrepreneurial world is not very valuable to them, and it needs fundamental changes. Therefore, this article aims to remove the theoretical gap between these two categories of research and to present a comprehensive critique of rural entrepreneurship so that this phenomenon is accepted considering conditions and preliminaries. Hence, the critique presented in this article is an in-between world for or against entrepreneurship [9]. Although Dey regarded the votes presented by Jones and Spicer to be antagonistic, this article argues that it can help to build a more balanced critical model in association with theories that are less radical in nature. In addition to adopting a radical realist critique, a combination of objective concepts regarding embodiment and ecology on the one hand and abstract discussions of neoliberalism on the other hand, is another important contribution of the article to entrepreneurship studies. Whether rural entrepreneurship can be considered a continuation of these new transformations of development or not, whether rural entrepreneurship should be followed with criticisms and reforms or it should be abandoned, and how rural entrepreneurship relates to rural development are among the questions that will be addressed in this paper. Thus, it can be

indicated that the present paper is a conceptual and theoretical attempt to analyze the inner workings of rural entrepreneurship as a development strategy in the form of the discourse of so-called development (3) [10] and to disintegrate the three-dimensional paradigm of rural prosperity. In the present work, Campbell Jones and André Spicer's critical perspective on entrepreneurship [11] is used, accompanied by Aram Ziai's skeptical post-development theory [12,13] and Rosenqvist's hermeneutical realism [14]. To investigate and analyze entrepreneurship from a new perspective, this paper first creates the necessary context and concepts and then outlines future prospects or perspectives by explaining what is called the paradigm of rural prosperity. The process of creating the proposed paradigm is based on the analytical work and conceptualization to present three pillars. The first pillar emphasizes rural embodiment and bio-agency as a missing link in the dominant rural entrepreneurship discourse. The second pillar is a critique of the neoliberal nature of the dominant (rural) entrepreneurship discourse and its transformation into an economic discourse, including ethical themes, such as constraints and collective values. The third pillar includes sustainability analysis as a return to nature itself to involve non-human actors in the development process. According to the significance of issues, such as environmental crises in countries such as India and Iran, and the role that neoliberal policies have played in the history of these two Asian countries, as well as the importance of manual labor in agriculture and rural areas, existing theoretical frameworks have high applicability in such countries. However, considering the increasing universality of the entrepreneurial literature, the issues raised will be applicable to many cultural and geographical contexts.

2. A History of Entrepreneurship, Rural, and Development

Entrepreneurship, whether in economics as its basic science or in other sciences, such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, and development, has considerably generated debates. It can be interpreted as a theoretical dichotomy. There are steadfast supporters of entrepreneurship representing the significant relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth and development [1–3,15,16]. Moreover, this phenomenon has been criticized sociologically and anthropologically in numerous studies [4–8,17–19]. Today, considering the reports and projects of Global Entrepreneurship Monitoring (GEM), the relationship between entrepreneurship and growth and development is taken for granted, and mentioning the research praising entrepreneurship is beyond the scope of this paper. However, historically, there has been an area of multi-disciplinary entrepreneurship since about 1980, with features such as importance of social values, sociological studies, and entrepreneurial opportunities including social constructs. In other words, the way to look at the initially economic phenomenon of entrepreneurship from “a discourse perspective” is now smoother than ever. Regarding the concept of rural and rurality, it is indicated that the old and embodied view of rural has evolved into the concept of Rural Society and then Rural Domain [14,20,21]. From an embodied view, rural is considered only from a geographical and spatial perspective. However, the concept of Rural Society and then Rural Domain includes values, culture, rural identity, integration of rural and urban, hyper-real communities, rural life experience, and in general constructivism, meanings, signs, and symbols related to the rural. Acceptance of rural entrepreneurship as one of the most recent strategies of “rural development” [1–3] and then a critical view of it should be included within the general framework of paradigms with a critical view of development. In other words, two criticisms are encountered by rural entrepreneurship. Furthermore, development is faced with rural constraints and is confronted with entrepreneurship literature. Ronaldo Munck [10] investigated development from a Marxist perspective and presented a threefold division of development: Development 1, Development 2, and Development 3. The first development was formed following the Enlightenment Movement in Europe, the French Revolution, and under the leadership of thinkers such as August Comte, emphasizing progress with discipline. With the end of World War II and the emergence of the United States as a global superpower, Development 2 occurred, a discourse that sought to replace old colonial policies and to create, manage, and reproduce a Regime of Truth in Third

World countries. Now, modernization and order replaced progress, and discipline was displaced by progress and discipline (Ibid: 11), and the contradiction was highlighted and intensified between tradition and modernity. The collapse of communism and the rise of globalization in the 1990s coincided with the formation of the discourse of Development 3. The characteristics of this period include the emergence of East Asian Tigers, the integration of the former communist countries of Eastern Europe into the world economic system, and the emergence of neoliberalism. In this sense, neoliberalism can be considered a new orthodoxy due to flexibilization of labor, privatization of state-owned enterprises, empowerment of social networks, and global free trade. In fact, it can be stated that Development 3 is the same as globalization and the emergence of the post-development era, which seeks to eliminate inequalities between nations and universal marketization and to form a flat world based on the end of history notion. In any case, the metaphor of growth remained the key to social (human) evolution in all three divisions and fed the discourse of development. During this period, development was accompanied by constraints owing to theoretical and methodological challenges arising from globalization, feminism, and post-modernism [22]; however, concepts and phenomena, such as “Indigenous Development”, “Endogenous Development”, “Bottom-up Development” and “Local Development”, were formed.

3. Entrepreneurship and Considering It from a Critical and New Perspective

As summarized in the introductory section, Jones and Spicer’s Critical Unmasking Theory provides a new context and concepts around entrepreneurship in a new perspective. Today, entrepreneurship is like a ghost constantly moving not only over the economy but overall social spheres of life. Modernity has been subordinated to entrepreneurship [23]. Therefore, Jones and Spicer attempt to break this domination by moving from functionalist and interpretive approaches to a critical one in entrepreneurship. This transition from one stage or paradigm (or paradigm shift) is highly important in discussing the theory of hermeneutical realism and the three pillars of rural prosperity paradigm. The transition from essentialist and reductionist theories of naturalism related to rural embodiment, the transition from orthodoxy and intertwined essentialism in neoliberalism, and the transition from the paradigm of domination over nature in the discussion of sustainability are examples of the paradigm shift in this paper that have considerable implications in the discussion of rural development and entrepreneurship. In the functionalist approach, the entrepreneur and entrepreneurship are regarded as a process in the capitalist economic system aiming at producing utility, profit, and added value. Thus, entrepreneurship is considered only in the business environment as a permanent successful process. In the interpretive approach, entrepreneurship is not only the process of producing utility but also the creator of meaning and understanding. Here, we have the Social Construction of Entrepreneurship. Shane and Venkataraman have conducted valuable research [24,25] on the concept of opportunity in the entrepreneurship process. Today, the entrepreneurial process is considered a process encompassing opportunity evaluation and opportunity exploitation, a definition on which there is a consensus. Moreover, finding an opportunity, acting on it, and organizing it all depend on the Perceptual Schemes of individuals (entrepreneurs). Jones and Spicer [11] using terms such as “entrepreneurial fashion” emphasize that entrepreneurship is more of a cognitive gymnastics than of an economic ability. Finally, an attempt has been made in the critical theory to emphasize and unmask the actions, economics, and politics of entrepreneurship. Here, entrepreneurship is regarded as a discourse. In other words, the language used in the context of entrepreneurship and the power relations—relations that can be hegemonic—following the use of this language are extremely important. The critique of entrepreneurship discourse in Jones and Spicer’s theory is based on four principles: (a) The critique of representation centered on conflicts and contradictions of discourse and the contrast between the symbolic and the real in Jacques Lacan’s interpretation of language. In this sense, the discourse is built around an Empty Signifier filled with any content. (b) The critique of the effects associated with entrepreneur and entrepreneurship, in which the discourse emerges (transforms into action) through the awareness of the subjects. This

means analysis of language through its connection to political and economic forces and its binding and hegemonic nature in relation to speakers or listeners of language. (c) The critique of structural constraints, including nation's power and colonial relations. (d) The critique of the agency. From this perspective, entrepreneurs can seize the dominant entrepreneurship discourse to rethink and reshape it in their appropriation. In general, from Jones and Spicer's viewpoint (Ibid: 26), the critical theory to entrepreneurship aims to place entrepreneurship at the heart of political and social conflicts, to examine its political and economic consequences, and to unmask its forming power relations. This is a step toward rewriting entrepreneurship. Considering the post-development school, it can be considered a result of the changes occurring in the 1980s, with the rise of post-modernism as a school of thought and a social movement, thus leading to evolution of development theory to development studies [26]. The discussion of two major trends in post-development, namely new-populist post-development and skeptical post-development, was first presented in one article by Aram Ziai [12]. Ziai contrasts, or rather completes, the famous dichotomy of "an alternative to development" and "alternative development", presented by the post-structuralist thinker Arturo Escobar. For Ziai, post-development is a critical reaction inspired by the views of Michel Foucault and Ivan Illich on Europe-centered hegemonic processes of development and the westernization of the world, inequality between rich and poor nations, and the failure to fulfill classic development promises such as elimination of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Most of Michel Foucault's innovative concepts, including archaeology of development, knowledge, and power; autonomous production of truth; and insurrection of subordinated knowledge are reflected in post-development texts. However, Ziai argues that some post-development texts are committed to Foucault's genealogy of knowledge, as Marxism–Leninism is to Marx's ideas. Based on such scrutiny and separation of critiques, Ziai distinguishes between new-populist post-development and skeptical post-development. Based on Ziai's view, skeptical post-development has the following characteristics: (a) analysis and scrutiny of previous traditions, not a complete rejection or glorification of them, (b) appropriation of modernity, not an unreasonable rejection of it, (c) establishment of a social relationship that is fundamentally different in nature, instead of adhering to a political ideology, (d) reliance on a constructivist and dynamic rather than on an essentialist concept of culture, and (e) reliance on the internal relations of social power, while emphasizing the international relations of such power. Comparison of Jones and Spicer's theory as well as Ziai's skeptical post-development theory [12,13] reveals common conceptual points, including (a) rejection of the idea of discursive unity and regularities and emphasizing non-monolithic development of a construct (in other words, genealogical discourse analysis should not be turned into a kind of ideological platform), (b) rejection of the idea of victimization of development by the stakeholders and the fact that they have a false awareness, (c) emphasis on semantic multiplicity in relation to the concept of "development", and finally (d) emphasis on hierarchical, colonial, and hegemonic dual constructs. The existence of such commonalities implies that by combining these two theories, a critical and unmasking approach can be achieved to rural entrepreneurship. This approach should emphasize the existence of discontinuities and contradictions in both rurality and entrepreneurship discourses while insisting on the importance of (non-discourse) constructs and their impact on entrepreneurial thinking and practice. It should also regard the human agency as well as his allegiance and submission. The hermeneutical realism approach lays the groundwork for a better and more detailed explanation of these categories and establishes the three main and analytical pillars of this paper.

4. Hermeneutical Realism: A Conceptual Model for Holistic Understanding of Rural and Rurality

Rosenqvist [14], using a philosophy called "hermeneutical realism", has reviewed the concept of the rural as a holistic understanding. In this philosophy, space is no longer limited to geographical and physical existence. It also includes figurative dimensions

based on using the language and cultural categories. Such an entrepreneurship analysis is interesting and necessary, particularly in the present post-modern era, when images, language, and signs are important. Rosenqvist's analysis can be evaluated following Dabson and Clock's studies [20,21], in which the embodied concept of rural evolved into social, cultural, and linguistic concepts of Society and Rural Domains. Moreover, both rurality and rural identity, as well as entrepreneurship, are defined as constructed phenomena. In Rosenqvist's view and from an ontological viewpoint, the space in the world is manifested in two ways of literal and figurative. Literal manifestation refers to geographical and physical space, while the figurative manifestation of space is an abstraction existing separately from physical space. The abstraction of figurative space can be described as virtual, linguistic, social, cultural, and effectual space. Here, we encounter the situatedness of an object in the sense of its place in the constructs formed by language, time, awareness, society, culture, and values. Such dimensions have equal importance to the physical and astronomical aspects of space, since they limit the presence of individuals, groups, and things while creating opportunities and space for them. In Rosenqvist's view, human beings do not exist only within geographical space, but language and other figurative meanings always influence their existence. According to hermeneutic philosophy, we humans do not live in a vacuum, and our mental experiences of the world are affected by our surroundings, both humans and objects. Our lifeworld is our being, our living, and our understanding. Our being is, in turn, influenced by time, language, and freedom. We have never been and are not separated from time. What affects us now can be influenced by our memories (past time) and our expectations (future time). We cannot live without language. Thinking is nothing but talking to oneself. Language is a set of signs, and their association with each other makes the world categorized and meaningful to us. Finally, freedom, as the last element of being, means that the external world does not completely determine one's life, and each person's freedom is bound by another's freedom. The second component of the lifeworld is living, which is based on the concept of objectivity. It is not possible to live without objectivity. Objectivity means that things outside the lifeworld attract our attention and demand something from us; therefore, mere being is turned into a living. As phenomenologists have stated that awareness is always intentional, awareness is always an awareness of something. We interpret things and phenomena and thus act on them. Finally, the third component of the lifeworld is understanding, which is the nature within us, something occurring within us. Understanding means that we tend to define the boundaries of our lifeworld as we interact with what is outside our lifeworld. Understanding lies between the reader and the text, the speaker and the listener, the interpreter and the interpreted. The important question that is addressed in the next sections is how Rosenqvist's hermeneutic realism provides the basis to create the (three) pillars of what has been known as rural success, using Jones and Spicer's as well as Ziai's critical views.

5. First Pillar: Rural Embodiment (Embodiment, Body Schema, and Emotions)

In short, the purpose of the first pillar is to include embodiment in three areas: (a) the physical and material aspects of the body, (b) body schema, and (c) the emotional status of man. Figure 1 shows this pillar. Embodiment is important, since individuals' awareness is rooted and not separated from their bodies or embodiments [27]. Embodiment is a missing element in the entrepreneurship process. Therefore, the purpose of this pillar is to return the embodiment to the entrepreneurship process. The main argument is that, owing to Descartes' dichotomy of mind–body domination in the entrepreneurship literature, particularly in the discovery school, the basis of both concept of awareness and concept of creativity has been completely neglected in the entrepreneurship literature. Awareness does not only mean discovering the shortcomings of the "market", and creativity does not only mean a "new composition" in the sources of production; rather, they are the product of organizing a new cognitive and embodied way of dealing with international developments (for example, climate change, globalization, and feminism), national (such as privatization,

government employment policies, and changes in people's tastes), and local developments (immigration, agricultural hardship, prevalence of industry in the rural areas, urbanization, and natural disasters). Resilience to climate change and high temperatures, influence of feminism in rural areas, fluctuations in demand and taste, and difficulty of farming all have body and embodiment implications. Entrepreneurship discourse should be able to reveal its association with these categories. To transform entrepreneurship into a phenomenon considering the body more seriously, one should speak of embodiment as a resource for challenging the existing order. Such a process—called prosperity in this paper—requires the creation of a kind of comprehensive awareness of the surrounding world. Moreover, awareness is not very meaningful without a bodily foundation, as according to an Iranian proverb, “a healthy mind is in a healthy body”. Reviewing rural entrepreneurship and its involvement within political and economic struggles requires adopting new attitudes toward the body and embodiment and understanding that the body is both a medium to express the tendencies and attitudes of society and a creative and vibrant source of new perceptions. If we accept that rural entrepreneurship is closely associated with multi-functional agriculture [28], then the transformation of entrepreneurship into multi-functional agriculture requires fundamental changes in bodily perceptions intertwined with masculinity and heterosexuality and the affirmation of a kind of bodily comfort, rather than pressure on the body by a tough man. Here, we discuss embodiment, or real bodies [29]. Even the human development index (HDI) does not explicitly mention human physicality or embodiment. The inclusion of embodiment in the entrepreneurship process requires a transition to a different understanding of rural embodiment. In hermeneutical realism, the rural body is not a hard-working, masculine, and oppressed being that nourishes other bodies but needs no nutrition itself. However, it is an embodiment living in the heart of constructs and cultural and social factors, while having materiality and physicality and its understanding and function. In this sense, entrepreneurial alertness, prediction, creativity, and ability can all be summarized and analyzed in a cognitive and psychomotor set. The negotiable and constructivist discourse of entrepreneurship must pay attention to this body schema, which is rooted in the rural environment crossing geographical and physical boundaries. Here, the body schema is used in a sense similar to Shilling [27] and means physical topography, as well as the experience of living in a social environment. In this sense, body schema means the inclusion of a geographical or physical body within a figurative space. For example, if farmers want to be diversified and multi-occupational, they must reorganize and re-evaluate their mental perception—through attitudes and perceptions—and life experience—through body schema-concerning rural space and agricultural work. Another example is climate change, which raises both the need to pay attention to the body—and society as a whole collective entity—and the multiplicity in the rural. The questions to be answered here is how resilient the body is to climate change and high temperatures, particularly in rural areas with low rates of underdevelopment, and is it still possible to continue agriculture as an old and long-lasting means of livelihood in warmer and drier conditions? Another aspect of the inclusion of the body and embodiment in the entrepreneurship process is related to the emotional aspect of entrepreneurship, which is less addressed. Most of the personality traits mentioned in psychological approaches for entrepreneurs, such as risk-taking, confidence, autonomy, and creativity, indicate the human/entrepreneur emotional aspects. “Resistance” to innovation, as well as the anxiety of losing money caused by incorrect “predictions” during the entrepreneurship process, has both embodied and emotional aspects. The word “prosperity” has positive psychological connotations, and thus it has emotional aspects. Embodied gymnastics or identity-building bio-agency requires a kind of emotional outburst in the body to become an entrepreneur and overcome power relations at both national and local levels seeking to maintain the status quo. In this regard, David Goss' study [8] provides a new analysis of entrepreneurship based on Burrell and Morgan's metatheory. Goss argues that Schumpeter's insights into the sociology of entrepreneurship emphasizing individuals' will and motivation contain key elements and variables, such as social interaction and emotions. The dual meanings—both

psychological and social—represented by Goss as Schumpeter’s traits for entrepreneurs are well developed in the form of Randall Collins’s interaction ritual theory (IRT) [30]. The core of the interaction ritual theory is emotional energy. Collins argues that the macro-level order-producing mechanisms in classical sociology (including power, ideology, values, and norms) are based on emotions. Collins’s view can be expanded to include the concept of dissatisfaction with erroneous predictions in the entrepreneurship process and its relation to depression. Therefore, the body (and emotions) is another embodied aspect, which has been overlooked in the entrepreneurship literature. In addition, some studies [31] revealed that high levels of depression and isolation were evident in entrepreneurs who were unable to sell their products due to a lack of proper marketing. Here, we encounter a kind of entrepreneurial body, but one isolated and cut off from others as well as space [32], which is increasingly moving toward lack of desire and silence. Generally, it can be stated that the need to address embodiment, particularly in rural areas with a deeper connection with nature, is twofold. Hence, rural entrepreneurship must be a kind of link between the body and the environment. Hence, a naturalistic or nature-friendly body can be considered a body not satisfying its desires in exchange for harm to nature.

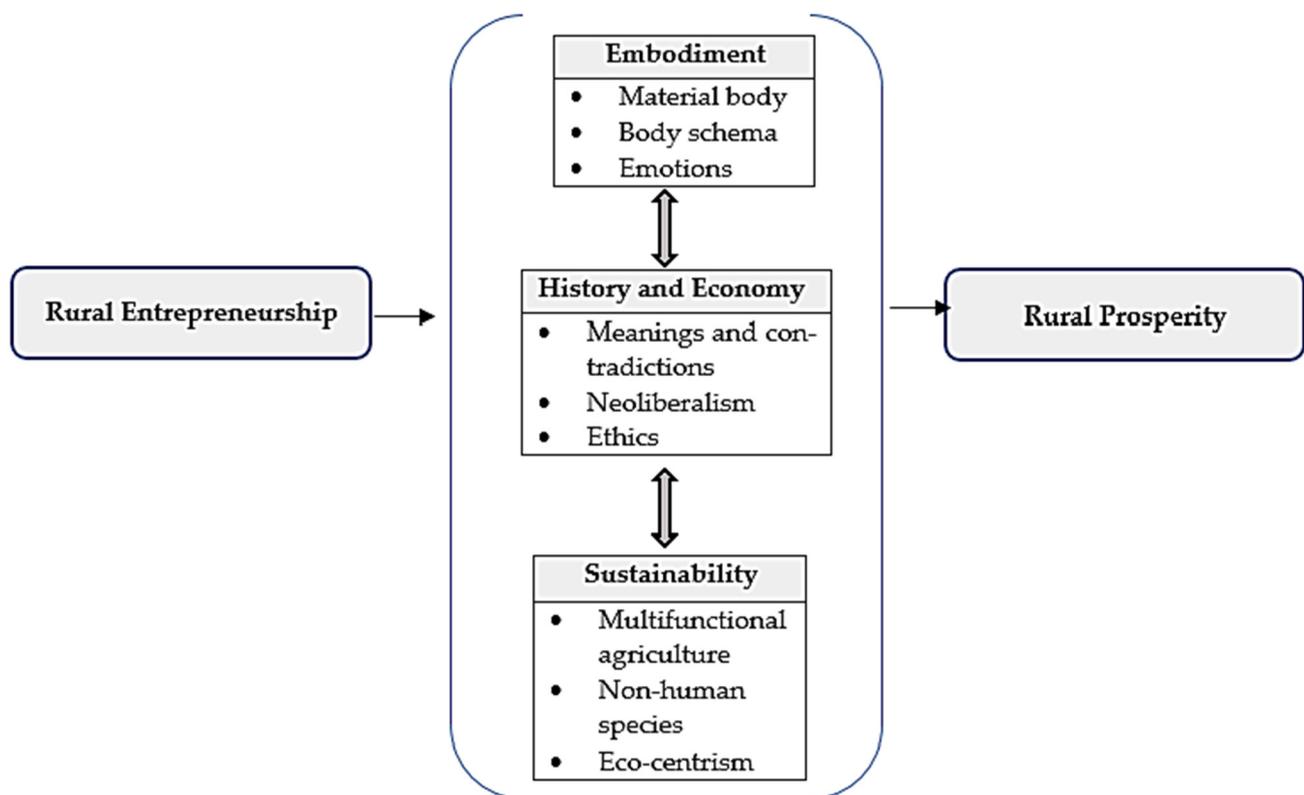


Figure 1. An integrated model for rural prosperity.

6. Second Pillar: From Capitalist Individualism and Profit Maximization to the Moral Economy

The purpose of this pillar is to present a brief history of entrepreneurship and neoliberalism, to emphasize the inclusion of ethics in the general fabric of the society, to move beyond methodological individualism intertwined in the entrepreneurship literature, particularly in Schumpeter’s thought, the rejection of the maximalist assumption in neoliberal economics, and to regard it as a particular kind of freedom emphasized in both hermeneutical realism and Jones and Spicer’s views. In the following, the connection between the history of neoliberalism and the history of entrepreneurship is discussed. Furthermore, it is revealed that there is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship, which is rooted in the Austrian school, and Adam Smith’s classical economics. Thus, with the failure of

the positivist orthodoxy of the 1950s [33], leaving the modernization school behind in the late 1950s, this school and theoretical transition to the dependency theory of the 1960s and 1970s were unsuccessful. It did not work in any country except Tanzania. With new laws in the United States as well as new regulations and privatization in Britain, the capital is free to move across borders, and no government (let alone a small, poor government) can pursue an economic policy against capitalists. Economic planning, welfare systems, and monetary and tax policies are all effectively controlled by capital markets. Government and large-scale post-war development projects have been replaced by small- and mid-sized enterprises (SMEs) run by maximizer individuals. Entrepreneurship, which is inherently a model of capitalist development, has been raised since the 1900s to bridge the gap between the neoclassical theory in economics and the social approach. It became a priority in free market-based economic policies in the early 1980s and with a slight delay in a country such as Iran in the 1990s. Such policies increasingly lead to neoliberalism and superiority of the financial sector overproduction. A study [34] on the history of development in India reveals that how Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) relinquished its monopoly on planning for India's future with the economic liberalization in 1991. Designing what became known as entrepreneurial citizenship, and following Indian immigrants working in Silicon Valley, it requested all political parties, media, and business lobbies to set up startup villages and to promote a "patent" culture. In Iran, for more than two decades, all governments have insisted on entrepreneurship as a "sacred and obvious aspect" [31]. Iran is a country that has embraced and acted on the structural adjustment policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund since the 1990s when Hashemi Rafsanjani took office. A study in Iran indicates how government-based—actually a regulating government operating in an economy between a state-owned economy and a free market—entrepreneurship discourse is influenced by capitalist relations, such as public expropriation, commodification of nature, and commodification of labor. Moreover, the shortcomings in capital accumulation, the dominance of unproductive activities over productive, the commercial capital over the domestic producers, and the capital outflows (capital flight) over the capital inflow (investment and accumulation) disrupt the capitalist process. These cases cause lending to become a source of rentiership and therefore, in both urban and rural areas, it has led to a rival discourse that relies on fixing and has goals that contradict the development discourse. Schumpeter's views promote a kind of methodological individualism intertwined with the Austrian school [35]. Schumpeter's departure from Walras' concept of stationary economy is evident in *The Theory of Economic Development* (1911) and through the concept of business cycles [36]. After the publication of the second volume of *Theory of Economic Development* in 1926 and the book *Business Cycles* in 1939, Schumpeter took a more limited and systematic position on entrepreneurship, and, as Swedberg puts it, he moved from a Dionysian to an Apollonian position. Then, it has been argued that Schumpeter also seeks some forms of capitalist entrepreneurship development. Considering the issue of the priority and least priority of entrepreneurship and the basic economic system, along with capitalism as the driving force of economic development, it has long been assumed that economics has little to offer in terms of entrepreneurship [35–38]. Most of the dominant economists of the 18th and 19th centuries, such as Cantillon, Smith, and Say, never considered entrepreneurship as a source of change, development, and progress [39]. However, some Austrian economists have such a broad view of the entrepreneur that they sometimes use the term "entrepreneur" simply because profit or income is associated with risk or uncertainty and consider industrialists and factory owners as entrepreneurs. Even Ludwig Von Mises suggested that entrepreneurship might lose money due to misprediction of consumer needs, thereby creating obstacles to economic development and finally wasting resources. There are subtle differences between thinkers such as Mises and Schumpeter and Krizner and Hayek. However, in this paper, we agree that they have all sought to implement entrepreneurship as a strategy to advance the capitalist economy [37]. Therefore, even if entrepreneurship is related to development, it is more of a complementary strategy aiming at creating employment for those who are lagging behind the development in

rural areas, while considering industrial and service sectors. It is worth noting that in the strategy of modernity, we observe a form of “integrated rural development” as a kind of intervention and comprehensive attack on passive rural environments and cultures to manage and control them. However, in entrepreneurship, there is the same attack, not from the “developer”, but the “entrepreneur”. Here, the entrepreneur is introduced as someone competing with other entrepreneurs to obtain facilities from banks. He/she only seeks to maximize his/her own or corporate profits in the globalized and neoliberal economy dominated by transnational corporations. Entrepreneurship can be the evil twin of development in the sense that it disrupts the development or causes it to be forgotten. Therefore, it is highly important to be familiar with the history of entrepreneurship while deconstructing its language and conceptual contradictions in the entrepreneurial discourse. This is emphasized by both the skeptical post-development and the critical theory proposed by Jones and Spicer. Accordingly, the purpose of the second pillar is to incorporate inclinations, values, and identities into the notion of maximalism, as one of the foundations of entrepreneurial thinking. Kean Birch [39], a moderate and important researcher and critic of neoliberalism, argues that when we become entrepreneurs under the influence of neoliberalism, rentiership is further increased in the economy. In Birch’s view (Ibid: 131), entrepreneurship is highly correlated with neoliberalism. Birch (Ibid: 30) also states that at least eight important schools of thought are evident in the intellectual history of neoliberalism, the most important of which are the schools of Chicago and Austria. However, they all have common features, such as monopoly of elites through corporations and holdings, market essentialism, financialization, deregulation, reduction or cessation of public service austerity, and prevalence of rentiership and corruption, which can be classified under entrepreneurship. All of these features can be outlined to some degree in Iran’s economy. For example, Ziai [13] mentions the destructive impact of foundations on Iran’s economy, giving a demagogic and reactionary character to the development discourse of the country, while most of these foundations control a significant part of Iran’s economy and attempt to escape the tax. Earlier in this regard, we mentioned the prevalence of corruption in the lending discourse of entrepreneurship policies in Iran. Today’s crisis of the Tehran Stock Exchange is due to the undisputed dominance of legal entities (monopolies) over Iran’s monetary and banking economy. Essentialism in culture, influenced by a political–ideological structure, has paved the way for entrepreneurial essentialism. Here, entrepreneurs are referred to as holy men driving the economy alone. Of the USD 1.5 billion credit from the National Development Fund for rural development and job creation in rural areas in September 2018, approximately USD 22 million was allocated to Sistan and Baluchestan Province—one of the most deprived provinces in the country [40]. However, of the 9285 villages in the province, 2732 (approximately 30%) have been deserted during the recent 15-year drought. This indicates the prevalence of hegemonic and essentialist discourse of entrepreneurship while not critically considering it. Entrepreneurship has progressed simultaneously with backwardness in development. Ziai emphasizes cultural essentialism in skeptical post-development and rejects it. Reliance on the contradictions is a component of Jones and Spicer’s critical theory and skeptical post-development theory. Furthermore, the concept of living, which is the product of the mind’s intention toward the world around it (humans, plants, animals, and the earth all play a role in inhabitants’ lives), is not possible except by abandoning (economic and sociocultural) epistemological essentialism. Abazari [41], a prominent sociologist in Iran, criticizes the Persian translation of the entrepreneur and points to the entrepreneur’s rent-seeking characteristics from a more radical position than Birch holds. He blames the implementation of Hayek–Friedman policies as one of the causes of the 2008 financial crisis. Like Abazari, Simon Springer [42] considers neoliberalism from a critical perspective and presents the razor-sharp critique from Foucault’s viewpoint assuming that neoliberalism is a discourse. His prose skillfully fluctuates between academic and literary styles and embraces both. Both Abazari’s paper and Springer’s critique suffer from the flaw the same as Birch when criticizing Dardot and Laval’s book *The New Way of the World*: the lack of empirical evidence for the claims made.

Springer's analysis is interesting, since it relates privatization and entrepreneurialism to the imperialist goals of metropolitan countries in places such as Afghanistan, their geographical reconstruction, and the creation of uneven development in those countries. Neoliberalism attempts to restore power to weak countries such as Afghanistan, which have an open economic space, with the slogan of geographical reconstruction and the logic of securitization. "Dirty work" and "regulatory power" of neoliberalism will only be revealed by a precise deconstruction of its discourse and interpretation of its meaning (Ibid: 73). This analysis seeks to explore the meaning of both neoliberalism and entrepreneurship. Personal interest, which is the ultimate goal of business activities, is at the core of Schumpeter's views and requires serious attention. Adam Smith's pseudo-problem and the contradiction of his views on "Wealth of Nations and the Theory of Moral Sentiments" show how economics cuts off the moral system, particularly in the Austrian school, and emphasizes entrepreneurship to put the latter first. Therefore, based on hermeneutical realism, a different orientation (a component of life) should be considered toward existence (capitalist-based entrepreneurship), which is created through the exercise of the freedom right of economic actors (agency) in the rural arena. This agency-based existence is born of the integration of the moral system (society) with a profit-oriented economy. The intervention of ethics does not mean the establishment of any kind of individual ethics (micro-moral system), such as the right to own property, the right to accumulate and transfer wealth, the establishment and registration of companies—or the concentration of morality in an institution called the state. However, as stated in the first principle of Spicer and Jones's theory, it is a new representation of the entanglement of ethics with entrepreneurship, rural, and rurality, which can be achieved by creating a macro-moral system. The debate is over the distribution of ethics in the general fabric of the economic system. The ultimate goal here is to prevent the transformation of human beings to enterprises or investment opportunities through the ethnics of the social fabric and to restore identity and emotions to the homo economicus, who is an entrepreneur of the self. Instead of an omnipotent market, one must speak of omnipotent ethics and release social relations from the predicament of corporate bondage. The moral system, either micro or macro, can be constrained by government policies in line with market-oriented liberalism, through pressure from institutions such as the International Monetary Fund or strong lobbies, such as pharmaceutical companies. On the contrary, it can be expanded through voluntary environmental standards by companies, government policies, and NGO activists, and the shift in consumption patterns to value consumption to support weak and underdeveloped producers. In fact, what is called "fair trade" can be extended from handicrafts to agricultural products. Consumers can easily support fair trade practices and policies. The element of living in hermeneutical realism is based on the emergence of action toward the surrounding world, an action that is reflected by ethics according to the present work. The modern German philosopher Kant interprets ethics as a kind of practical intellect. The normal integration of ethics into the capitalist economy is the new intention of rural actors toward the figurative space of the rural. The figurative space will be based on dual hegemonic and colonial constructs existing in both the entrepreneurship literature, such as the creative and innovative entrepreneur versus the ordinary farmer, and the rural development literature, such as the civilized versus the savage. In short, the second pillar includes (a) a description of the history and scrutiny in the meaning of entrepreneurship and rurality, (b) an explanation of the neoliberal aspects of entrepreneurship through a moderate critique of neoliberalism, and (c) inclusion of an ethical system in the entrepreneurial process.

7. Third Pillar: Sustainability and Return to Nature Itself (The Right to Live for the Rural Ecosystem)

This section emphasizes that entrepreneurship must first be transformed into multi-functional agriculture, then to the protection of animals and plants rights, and finally to the preservation of space (ecosystem) in its figurative sense, or it is presented in the form of these phenomena. Rural entrepreneurship is the evidence of structural changes

in rural communities and agriculture. Some of these changes are reflective and act as a response to changes in urban environments, markets, and government policies, while some are inherent in rural communities and environments. The changes encompass trade liberalization, market changes, transformations, biotechnological advances, privatization, climate and ecological changes, and alterations in agricultural customers' tastes. Therefore, diversification of agricultural activities, by considering the agricultural-climatic and socioeconomic characteristics of the target areas, production of higher value-added products and their export, and reduction of production waste, has become the hallmark of rural entrepreneurship. The changes have also profoundly affected the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), since the move from productive agriculture to market-focused agriculture and the support of sustainable and eco-friendly agriculture are the key elements of this policy. The EU Agricultural Policy reforms have put farmers in a position where they are expected to have their farm as a company to develop as an entrepreneur. However, in Ziai's skeptical post-development theory, the view of the rural is like a territorial community. This territorial community acknowledges the fusion of urban and rural areas but always attempts to maintain its boundaries with the outside and to strengthen an ecological awareness. This maintenance of boundaries is a sign of the element of understanding in the hermeneutical realism model. One of the activities exemplifying the conceptualization of a territorial community is multi-functional agriculture. Multi-functional agriculture in adapting the element of understanding and, unlike entrepreneurship or in completing it, can be a sign of transition from one thing to another and the awareness of this transition. The changes range from traditional agriculture and cultivation patterns to service or industrial production, from productivism to post-productivism, and from ideological essentialism to culture and constructivist rurality. Ziai's skeptical post-development model emphasizes the importance of the concept of constructivist culture, while Jones and Spicer's conceptual model presents different interpretations or representations of the concept of entrepreneurship. These conceptual representations are developed in the hermeneutical realism model and are described in the form of a figurative space. Many European farmers are now engaged in multi-functional farming. According to Eurostat [43], in 2007, 10% of EU farmers were involved in one or more non-agricultural income-generating activities. Finland ranked first with 28%, followed by France with 24% and Sweden and the United Kingdom with 23%. In the Netherlands, approximately 19% of farmers were engaged in one or more profitable activities other than farming. The multi-functional agriculture concept, following the theoretical models presented in this paper, is based on a kind of rural and agricultural hermeneutics. In other words, it does not limit rurality to agriculture and emphasizes the importance of the construction process through language and time. Multi-functional agriculture in this sense contains semantic (discourse) and practical (procedural) implications from productivism to post-productivism. Multi-functional agriculture contains the important semantic and cultural element of identity, the element encompassing diverse orientations of rural people toward space, career, and gender. In this sense, identity can act as a drive from being to living and act on understanding in the hermeneutical realism model, and turn an ordinary farmer into an entrepreneur and then into a multi-functional or a multi-skilled person. Multi-functionality is a process examining both tradition and modernity by relying on individual agency. From this perspective, functional agriculture rejects the idea of unity and discourse order in rural and rurality. In the skeptical post-development theory, the transition from ideology to nature is explicitly mentioned in the discussion of development. This transition should first transform rural entrepreneurship into a phenomenon aiming at rewriting entrepreneurship and considering it in a new way. Nayeri [44] regards this phenomenon as the product of a social revolution. In designing his plan for a kind of eco-centric socialism, Nayeri points out that the domestication of animals and plants is the basis of agricultural communities and modern capitalist civilization. However, this process of domestication has caused at least half of the land and sea to be taken from the wildlife, the share that must be returned to it. Nayeri adds that systematic and complete domestication has caused fatal damage to plant and animal

species. Moreover, the breeding, fattening, cultivation, and artificial insemination of only a dozen crops (bananas, barley, corn, cassava, potatoes, rice, sorghum, soybeans, sugar beets, sugarcane, sweet potatoes, and wheat) and only five large domestic animals (cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and horses) destroy more than 70% of wild species. This process paved the way for the beginning of anthropocentric sixth extinction at a rate of more than 1000 times the rate of natural extinction. Therefore, any conceptualization of the central component of the rural entrepreneurship process, i.e., the opportunity component, must be conditional on the preservation of wild species and the rethinking of the dual wild–civilized structure. This conceptualization has also been emphasized by Rosenqvist [14]. Thus, the notion of human victimization should be transmitted to the notion of plant and animal victimization. Rural entrepreneurship should be able to soften human–animal relationships. Lefebvre, by introducing the concept of “Right to the City”, proposed a happy coexistence between man and animal, and the extension of some rights from man to animal for rebuilding the human–animal relationship and strengthening multi-functional agriculture. In this sense, the traditional farmer is changed to someone who protects public goods and genetic resources and receives a salary from environmental institutions. Therefore, the late concept of “Zoopolis” [45], which indicates granting citizenship rights to animals, should be considered in reforming the discourse and practice of rural entrepreneurship. Rethinking and critique of rural entrepreneurship can also be a prelude to provide a new context for research as interrupting or modifying discourse and practices related to the concept of “growth” or “developmentalism”. This requires a fundamental transformation of the relationship between man and nature. To better explain the transition from beings to the whole ecosystem or biosphere, we must take a broader look. In this regard, it should be emphasized that the concept of opportunity, which is considered a key component in the entrepreneurial process [46], should be defined and realized in completion and adaptation to nature. Thus, we witness the transition from the idea of domination of nature to the happy coexistence and harmony with nature. In this regard, Nayeri [44] explains that our forager ancestors saw themselves as a part of the surrounding world, so that some cultures regarded humans, animals, and plants as agents related to each other by blood ties and common ancestors. According to Nayeri, this is an eco-centric worldview, and for this paper, it should dominate the discourse and practice of rural entrepreneurship. In parallel with the expression of the concept of freedom for man, freedom can also be extended to human and animal species to challenge the dominant discourse(s) and structures and the analysis of the occasional and inevitable submission of man to objective (laws) and mental structures (language and its dichotomies). Hence, one can reach a discourse or at least a climate of opinion to critique homo-centrism and speciesism. Given the setback at the Cop26 Glasgow Summit on the Paris Agreement, which emphasizes only a “gradual” rather than an “abrupt” reduction in greenhouse gases and fossil fuels, especially coal, Nayeri’s eco-centric focus should be considered in entrepreneurial interventions. Briefly, the third pillar includes (a) explaining the relationship between rural entrepreneurship and multi-functional agriculture, (b) transitioning to the concept of Zoopolis and proposing the concept of citizenship for plants and animals, and (c) focusing on ecocentrism and its implications for rural entrepreneurship.

8. Discussion: Rural Prosperity, a Way to Beyond

Now, based on the three pillars and their components, it is possible to plan for rural prosperity. This concluding section of the paper, while presenting a final model for the research presented in Figure 1, describes rural prosperity in the form of suggestions and strategies that could outline future research in this area.

8.1. Rural Prosperity and Embodiment

Unlike rural entrepreneurship, rural prosperity has embodied and psychological implications that are even linguistically implicit in the word “prosperity”. Rural prosperity is the extension of the idea of human development and its accumulation with embodied resources

that have not been further considered in indicators, such as per capita income, education, and life expectancy. Therefore, rural prosperity must be able to deal with phenomena, such as rise of feminism in rural (the importance of embodiment in femininity), climate change (resistance to future high temperatures and droughts), and changes in customers' tastes (regarding rural not only as a source of grain production but also as a resort associated with issues, such as ecotourism, body, and embodiment) to account for the real body of flesh and blood. Body schema considers not only the topography of the body but also the presence of a rural figurative space. In this sense, it redefines rural entrepreneurship (in the three areas of agriculture, industry, and services) concerning the maintenance of independence and territorial constraints. By inclusion of the concept of space, rural prosperity paves the way for placemaking and, consequently, reverse migration. Rural prosperity is also the beginning of rethinking concepts, such as creativity, alertness, risk-taking, modernity, and prediction, in terms of the role that emotions play in creating them. Therefore, it can be argued that rural prosperity is the same as rural entrepreneurship accompanied by passion or emotional energy. Therefore, the analysis presented in this section complements the critical studies of entrepreneurship that have investigated this phenomenon from a discursive viewpoint, as well as studies that have examined rural embodiment. Rural prosperity in this section, from a bodily viewpoint, complements the classic discussions of the founders of entrepreneurship who have neglected entrepreneurship or entrepreneurs' emotional and physical aspects. However, Schumpeter has investigated entrepreneurs' psychological characteristics to some extent. Moreover, rural prosperity, unlike rural entrepreneurship, considers the interactions between geography and human/entrepreneur and regards them as interrelated factors.

8.2. Rural Prosperity and Emphasis on Semantic Contradictions, Neoliberalism, and Ethics

Rural prosperity is a kind of development paradigm regarding development as situated and contextualized. Thus, rural prosperity considers the meaning of development and rural, dynamic, and constructed in terms of historical conditions and the cultural and social context of society. Development can contain contradictions. As an example, failure to carry out a development project does not mean abandoning development altogether. Confirmation of contradictions blocks the way for rural prosperity to be hegemonized. In this regard, the investigation of the history of development, particularly the economic paradigm dominating a country or society, helps to reform the discourse and the practice of rural prosperity. In terms of the contradictions in entrepreneurship discourse, Dey [9] presents an agonistic critique of entrepreneurship, which is very similar to Jones and Spicer's critical theory. Neoliberal policies, regardless of the controversies surrounding the implications of this school, are strongly correlated with entrepreneurship practices. Thus, following the concept of understanding in the hermeneutical realism model, as well as the idea of binary structures, rural prosperity determines its position and boundary in policies and discourses of neoliberalism containing consensus, which is described in this paper. In this respect, it is emphasized that rural prosperity does not mean abandoning public government services and development paradigms such as community development, but it coincides with it. Community development also ensures the inclusion of ethical aspects of rural prosperity. Ethics here refers to the omnipotent ethic, which is replaced by the omnipotent market and is reflected, for example, in social entrepreneurship. In this respect, the rural prosperity in this section is influenced by research on ethical economy and development anthropology, and unlike classical entrepreneurship research, it does not reject contradictions but scrutinizes them. The contradictions include the conflict between development and entrepreneurship, the contrast between discovery theory and creation theory, the contradiction between self-interest and the collective interest, between classical economics, and neoliberalism. Therefore, rural prosperity is considered community development in terms of movement.

8.3. Rural Prosperity, Multi-Functional Agriculture, and Ecocentrism

The most important feature of rural prosperity here is the concept of transition, which contains the concept of constructivism, especially in space and nature. The transition from physical and geographical space to figurative space paves the way for multi-functional agriculture and the view of the rural area, not as a place isolated from the city, which is only used for production, but also as a site for consumption and off-farm activities. In rural prosperity, the integration between urban and rural is considered with concepts such as ruralization of urban (with the expansion of urban agriculture) and urbanization of rural (with the expansion of urban services to the rural) while emphasizing the independence of the rural as a territorial community. Rural prosperity involves the transition from ideology (for example, extreme market orientation) to nature and presents the concept of extending citizenship rights to plants and animals. For example, rural industrial development in rural entrepreneurship will be limited by environmental considerations and the right of habitat for wild species. Hence, the expansion of industrial livestock leading to deforestation and methane emissions will also be limited. Finally, the reference to methane and other greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide suggests an eco-centric issue in rural prosperity that presumably goes beyond the development of energy entrepreneurship and preserves the biosphere with a broad and hermeneutic understanding of space. Therefore, it can be stated that in the age of globalization of crisis, rural entrepreneurship is a discourse that has moved further away from the classical discourse of development. Hence, it is necessary to rewrite it as a new phenomenon or discourse possessing its lifeworld. Everything that has been abandoned with the advancement and expansion of rural entrepreneurship is now under the magnifying glass of rural prosperity. Finally, it can be expressed that rural prosperity is a feast of rural embodiment, post-neoliberalism, and sustainability, a feast that puts man, price, and planet on a table. Therefore, rural prosperity seeks to restore the most important components or elements that have been neglected in the development process over the past few decades, including nature and wild and non-human species. Rural prosperity, in this sense, aims to transcend pure productivism and to consider for what reasons economists have included it in their calculations as a component of “destruction”. This article attempts to present a reanalysis of what has been neglected in the discourse and practice of rural entrepreneurship to ensure the degree of adaptation of the entrepreneurial discourse and development. In the discourse and strategies of rural entrepreneurship, the importance given to components, such as body, geography, history, ethics, and ecosystem, is a testament to the extent of the adaptation of rural entrepreneurship discourse and rural development, so that rural prosperity is born of this adaptation.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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