RURAL-URBAN LINKAGES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR NEW FORMS OF GOVERNANCE

Eva Dick

TU Dortmund University
Eva.dick@tu-dortmund.de

ABSTRACT:
For a long time, rural and urban development was considered separately. This is true for the scientific discourse, in the context of which different social and economic dynamics were attributed to either urban or to rural areas. It can also be stated for (urban) planning and policy making which has traditionally been oriented by spatial development paradigms separating the urban and the rural.

Against this background the paper pursues two related objectives: The first is to discuss the manifold exchange relations and interdependencies between rural and urban areas: The most important ones manifest in multi-locational household livelihoods spanning migrants’ (mostly rural) areas of origin and (mostly urban) areas of destination; economic and production linkages between rural and urban areas; and mixed land uses particularly occurring in the surroundings of large cities – desakota regions as McGee (1991) has called the peri-urban rice belt around Indonesian cities, at the beginning of the 1990s.

The second objective is to examine novel forms of governance with an integrated perspective on rural and urban development oriented by people’s daily life and economic activity networks spanning the urban-rural divide. To promote economic and production linkages and manage land use (conflicts) between urban centres and their hinterlands, regional governance models relying on agreements struck between space-based stakeholders from public and private sectors and civil society are useful. And to better account for increasingly complex, mixed rural-urban livelihoods, communities of origin and destination need to adopt a multi-sited approach coordinating their economic and social services geared at migrant populations. The paper provides examples of existing instruments across Africa and Asia for integrated rural-urban governance and suggests points of departure for further developing them in the sense of an inclusive, people-centred planning and management.

KEY WORDS:
Rural-Urban Linkages, Migration, Governance, Regional Development, Urbanization
INTRODUCTION

For a long time, rural and urban development was considered separately. This is true for the scientific discourse, in the context of which different social and economic dynamics were attributed to either urban or to rural areas. It is also correct for development planning and policy making which has traditionally been oriented by spatial development paradigms separating the urban and the rural. Classification systems and definitions oriented by a rural-urban dichotomy are symptomatic and a result of this dualistic conception.

The present paper shows that, however, there are many linkages and interdependencies in what can be termed the peri-urban interface, as both a social and spatial reality. The most important linkages constitute household livelihoods spanning between rural areas of origin and urban areas of destination; economic interdependencies between rural primary- and urban secondary and tertiary occupation and production sectors; and ultimately mixed land uses particularly in the surroundings of major cities – desakota regions as McGee (1991) has called the peri-urban rice belt around Indonesian city, at the beginning of the 1990s.

Against this background urban-rural borders have become increasingly blurred and concepts underlying the present dichotomy need to be put under scrutiny. Specifically policy makers and planners need to take into account functional spaces and pluri-spatial engagements (both constituted by household livelihoods and flows of money, goods and ideas) cutting across the rural-urban divide and adjust spatial development strategies accordingly. For policy makers and development planners, this means to transcend former separations of “urban management” and “rural development”.

This paper is structured as follows. In the following, second chapter, I outline the most important dimensions of urban and rural linkages, as well as positive and negative aspects of these. In much of the developmental discourse rural-urban migration and economic relations are considered as detrimental for the rural areas. I argue that benefits may be as important. In chapter three I confront former with more recent planning approaches. Linking the rural and the urban they employ new spatial concepts, a particular focus on actors, as well as a strong attention towards local and regional governance. Examples and first lessons from governmentnal, NGO and donor programmes promoting rural-urban linkages are pointed out. The paper concludes with identifying the basic features and conditions for effective and people-centred governance in the urban-rural interface.

URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES – THREE BASIC DIMENSIONS

Intentions to conceptualize increasing rural-urban linkages for urban policy making have started in the 1990s (e.g. McGee 1991). It is generally assumed that these relations are becoming more important. This is due to improved transportation and communication links within and between countries, to the differentiation of production spaces in the context of global economic relationships and increasing welfare-gaps, among and inside nations. Furthermore, the assumption is that urban-rural linkages possess an important – and yet untapped - development potential. They can be considered especially relevant for the three dimensions of livelihoods of households, economic interdependencies and land uses, in the following terms:

Migration and household livelihoods: Contrary to the more common understanding that individuals make a once-in-a-lifetime decision to migrate from rural areas to the city and stay there forever, more recent empirical evidence points to more complex patterns of migration, in the context of securing
household livelihoods (Schmidt-Kallert 2009, Steinbrink 2009, Greiner 2008, Deshingkar/Farrington 2009). Scholars have repeatedly criticised earlier models of migration conceiving it as an individual as opposed to a household decision: Rather, “[family] or household factors may determine which member of the group migrates and ensure that the individual is supported so that the remaining members derive maximum benefit from the initiative (Lynch 2005: 114). This points to the existence of multi- or translocal households, of which one part of the family stays in the rural area of origin and the other migrates to the city, often over large distances and sometimes even crossing international borders (Schmidt-Kallert 2009). From the perspective of the rural household, non-farm income in the form of remittances becomes an integral part of its livelihoods, thereby increasing resilience to low or fluctuating agricultural incomes. From the perspective of urban household members the rural home area may represent an economic safety net (in case of rising urban unemployment, also affecting informal sector activities), ensure food security and fulfill important social functions at the same time. For instance, among migrant households in Durban, South Africa, the economically active members of the household migrate to urban areas while elderly relatives and young children stay in the rural home (Lynch 2005: 122, also Steinbrink 2009).

Risk minimization, as well as different forms of economic and social reciprocity can be considered beneficial both for the migrant household and even for rural development - provided money and knowledge transfers are productively reinvested and allow a certain level of accumulation of migration-related assets. However, migration in the long run may lead to the loss of human resources for the countryside (Kreibich/Schmidt-Kallert 2004, Thieme 2009). Furthermore, over time urban obligations and survival struggles may jeopardize home village-based networks and remittances decrease (Douglass 1998: 9). Until which degree household-based decisions on migration are beneficial for all members involved or rather overrule more vulnerable ones, e.g. women or girls, requires further scrutiny as well (Tacoli/Mabala 2010, Lynch 2005: 117).

Economic interdependencies: A dualistic identification of rural areas as spaces for agricultural production and urban areas as locations for industrial production and services implies serious limitations. First, it masks the complementary relationships and interdependencies between rural and urban areas. The first produce food for urban consumers and inputs for urban-based industrial production; the second provide services, consumption or regeneration spaces for the rural population. Second, it neglects that many rural households derive income from non-farm sources (Satterthwaite/Tacoli 2005: 9, Tacoli 2011: 11, Tacoli/Mabala 2010: 392); it further disregards the role of small and medium-sized rural towns as market nodes, providers of essential social services and locations for the development of locally- and regionally-based industries (Tacoli 2011: 10). Particularly in the context of national development strategies overly biased towards leading export-oriented economic sectors, the potential of local and regional value chains based on locally specific primary products or also service provision, e.g. in tourism, (Hutter/Neidhardt 2005: 14), has been rather neglected.

Thus, increasing economic linkages between rural and urban areas may be positive in the case they imply a diversification of the rural economy as well as income gains for the rural population. This is true if intra-regional economic growth is accompanied by the enlargement of the local or regional employment base. However, local or regional growth enclaves, be they agriculture or industry-based, may also entirely bypass rural towns and thereby populations, particularly in remote and badly connected areas (Satterthwaite/Tacoli 2003: 13f., Satterthwaite/Tacoli 2005: 8, Douglass 1998: 25ff.). This may happen in the case of export-oriented raw products which are directly shipped to the big cities other international markets.
Settlement and land use patterns: In the context of the planned or unplanned extension of the major cities, “urban” and “rural” land uses increasingly overlap. For instance, at the fringe of megacities former agricultural land is overbuilt by other, typically “urban” land uses. Gated communities or other formal suburban residential developments at the outskirts of megacities may have the same effect. Urban agriculture inside informal urban settlements constitutes a complementary source of income for poor households. The growth of infrastructure like highways and railways increases opportunities for short-distance commuting between rural fringe- and urban areas. Urban expansion and superposition of rural areas are not least driven by global market forces, as evidenced in the decentralisation of industrial production sites (Purushothaman et al. 2004: 9). It is clear that rural and urban land uses at the peri-urban interface can enter into conflict with one another, e.g. if under conditions of strong economic pressures former agricultural land is converted to industrial or commercial usage.

Positive aspects of urban land-use patterns intersecting or “overbuilding” rural ones constitute enlarged housing and employment opportunities for the migrating population. On the negative side, urban expansion involves the depletion of natural resources (air, water, and forests) or loss of land formerly used for agriculture (Hutter/Neidhardt 2005: 13, Purushothaman et al. 2004: 9). Conflicts between urban and rural land uses tend to become more likely.

Table no. 1 summarizes positive and negative aspects of increasing urban-rural linkages concerning the three dimensions of migration and household livelihoods, economic interdependencies and land use changes. These aspects constitute an important basis for governance strategies in the urban-rural interface, which, explicitly or implicitly, seek to promote the positive while discouraging the negative aspects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensionen</th>
<th>Positive Aspects</th>
<th>Negative Aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Household Livelihoods | - Accumulation of individual and household income and risk reduction through combination of rural and urban-based income sources  
- Skills transfer based on new experiences e.g. in urban informal sector  
- Information transfer (e.g. about jobs) through family and other informal migrant networks between home region and urban destination | - Lack of skills transfer due to (almost) exclusively precarious, sometimes exploitative, urban employment relationships  
- Individual alienation from rural social networks and mechanisms of social cohesion and control  
- Increasing problems for (formal) housing, infrastructure and employment provision in destination regions, e.g. megacities |
| Economic relationships | - Economic diversification and employment growth in rural areas  
- Forward- and backward linkages between regional economic sectors, e.g. agriculture and industrial production  
- Income increase for local population and thereby increasing demand for local/regional products and services | - Local production geared for national growth centers (metropolises) or international demand  
- Lack of linkage effects between agriculture and other sectors  
- Income stagnation or even decline for local population |
| Land use patterns | - Income gains and diversification for population in peri-urban areas; relatively affordable housing options in informal settlements | - Degradation of natural resources through urban expansion (sprawl), air and water pollution, noise etc.  
- Potentially violent land use conflicts |
PAST NEGLECT OF LINKING THE URBAN AND THE RURAL

Development researchers and practitioners alike have long considered rural and urban areas as opposed, rather than inter-linked categories, and as spatial entities with their unique problems and concerns (Schmidt-Kallert 2009). This is true, although scholars have early pointed to problems associated with the dichotomization of the “urban” and the “rural” and the inadequacy of the usual criteria for urban-rural differentiation such as population size, density or occupational structure.\(^1\)

As for planners’ conception and treatment of urban and rural areas, these have been characterized by a peculiar divide, not least against the background of their different ideological lenses (Douglass 1998: 2). In the German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ) as well in its principal implementation agency for technical aid, the German Agency for International Co-operation (GIZ), separate departments for “rural-“ and “urban development“ have existed for years.

In the context of a pro-urban view of planners and policy makers, cities were considered as engines of growth and development, and urban development as decisive to combat rural poverty. Against this background, economic and infrastructure development was geared towards growth centres or poles and industrial development, at the cost of investments towards the rural areas and the agricultural sector. Notwithstanding the intention of promoting a decentralised, spatially balanced development, in many developing countries growth pole strategies ended up exclusively benefiting the large and often capital cities. In this way, immense inter-regional welfare gaps and urban primacy became ever more accentuated (view e.g. for Tanzania, Sawers 1989).

On the opposing ideological end of an anti-urban view building on core-periphery and spatial polarization models, rural areas were considered essential for national economic development. Such view was also prompted by the fact that, at least in many Sub-Sahara African and Southeast Asian countries, the largest part of the population still lives in the countryside. Cities, particularly those on the top of the national urban hierarchy, were believed to be removing the most capable human and natural resources from rural areas. While the first generation of rural development projects were focused towards agricultural promotion, this sectoral orientation was later substituted by a more holistic approach: The so-called integrated rural development programs\(^2\) typically included the improvement of rural service provision and transport infrastructure, together with agriculture-based livelihoods.

The opposing paradigms of “urban management” and “rural development” were however not able to take into account the linkages between the two (Schmidt-Kallert 2004: 5). For instance, from a rural household’s perspective income earned by urban household members constitutes an integral part of economic survival. As a result, declines in urban employment, e.g. in the context of structural adjustment projects, may have a direct (and detrimental) effect on rural welfare (Lynch 2005: 174).

\(^1\) For instance, population thresholds hardly serve for cross-country comparisons (Tacoli 2011: 10) and fall short of bringing to light actual differences in living conditions between cities of different population size categories. Additionally, they also mask important differences among the (often) residual rural category. These may result from different modes of agricultural production, e.g. large-scale commercial versus small scale subsistence (Satterthwaite/Tacoli 2005: 8).

\(^2\) GTZ’s projects of “Rural Regional Development” (Ländliche Regionalentwicklung, LRE) are similarly oriented.
PLANNING PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING AN INTEGRATED VIEW

“Allocating people to discrete categories such as ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ assumes that these categories accurately reflect their realities” (Lynch 2005: 11)

Only recently, development co-operation agencies have started to tackle urban and rural development in an integrated way. This was prompted by the recognition that the former separate approaches are no longer able to appropriately capture livelihoods and policy concerns cutting across the urban-rural divide. But which aspects discern an integrated from a separate approach? In my opinion, the following three need to pointed out: a regional or territorial focus, actor-oriented development and the importance of local and/or regional governance.

Spatial focus: Planning approaches focusing on the needs and potentials of a specific spatial entity, rather than on planning sectors, have regained prominence. In this context, a particular emphasis is placed on the concept of the territory or region (Neidhardt 2010, Schmidt-Kallert/Stremplat-Platte 2005). People tend to commute from peripheral settlements to their city centre work places; rural households migrate to the nearest towns in search of complementary income; central city governments need to cooperate with those of peri-urban communities to create economically successful and environmentally sustainable city regions and manage urban sprawl. Thus, central cities and their suburban communities, as well as small towns and their rural hinterland form “functional regions” constituted through a dense network of people’s social, economic and political interactions.

GIZ Sectoral programme: Territorial development for rural areas

The programme “territorial development in rural areas” of the German Agency for International Development (GIZ) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has the aim of developing comprehensive strategies to tackle the problems of rural areas in developing countries. The programme’s most important feature is a spatial focus, in the sense that project activities are developed for a particular territory, which is defined on economic, topographic and/or socio-cultural grounds, thereby also promoting existing linkages between rural and urban areas within this territory. Other characteristics of the programme are process orientation, systemic and multi-sectoral procedures, inclusive development and organization of the civil society. The strategies conducted under the umbrella of the programme comprise a variety of policy fields, e.g. democratization/decentralisation, promotion of primary education and health and regional economic development. (Nill 2011, Neidhardt 2010)

Actor-centred development: New approaches of development cooperation part from the assumption that actors, with their specific needs and potentials, should be at the centre of development efforts. These actors may be target groups or intermediaries. Likewise, spatial development projects need to be the result of the cooperation between the relevant actors of a given territorial unit or region, from both public and private sectors. In this context, the task of planners is to moderate between common and conflicting interests, also taking into account potential power differentials between actors. For example, regional decision making between city centre and peri-urban communities is often biased in favour of the better organised and more experimented interest groups of the former.

The importance of local and/or regional governance: Regions as sub-national units tend to be constituted by different local communities also constituting the lowest government and administration
level in a country\(^3\). Local actors (governments, administrations, private enterprise, civil society) are not only well placed to define potentials and challenges of their particular region. Furthermore, their networking and partnerships with other regional stakeholders are decisive for a successful regional development and planning. Local and regional governance in the context of development co-operation needs to involve benefits for populations of lagging and leading regions alike, not least by investing into the natural resource- or agriculture-based growth potential of rural hinterlands (Douglass 1998: 11f.).

**POLICY FIELDS FOR PROMOTING RURAL-URBAN LINKAGES**

In this section I will discuss some relevant governance approaches and policy fields for an integrated treatment of urban and rural development. These comprise initiatives from both governmental and non-governmental actors, of which some are also supported by international development cooperation.

It has to be noted that from the side of development co-operation very few projects or programs explicitly mention an intention to draw on, or promote urban-rural linkages. UN-funded projects such as “Rural Urban Partnership Programme” (RUPP) in Nepal and “Poverty Alleviation through Rural-Urban Linkages” (PARUL) in Indonesia form an exception of the rule (view Website RUPP, Momen 2006). However, more and more projects in development co-operation implicitly contribute to strengthening urban-rural linkages, notably by stressing a regional, space-based and integrated, as opposed to a sectoral approach either oriented towards “rural” or “urban” problems (Nill 2011). This is certainly true for projects of German Development Co-operation, both Technical and Financial.

The underlying policy goals of planning and development approaches with a focus on regional integration and promotion (e.g. city centres and their peri-urban environment, small urban towns and their rural hinterlands) are the following: First, to promote a more sustainable expansion of mega-cities in view of the inherent threats of their uncontrolled growth on social and environmental sustainability.

Second, to contribute to more balanced spatial development by promoting rural regions and small and medium-sized towns with their specific development potential (Yachan 2004). This counteracts former urban and industry-biased policies focusing on capital or large cities. From the perspective of development co-operation, the promotion of small and medium-sized urban centres is considered especially relevant since these constitute major migration destinations, particularly of poor population groups (Tacoli 2011: 10, Satterthwaite/Tacoli 2003: 5f.).

In the following I will present four approaches and fields of governance for the support of rural-urban linkages: Mainstreaming migration into policies and governance, adjusting spatial governance units, local/regional economic development and land use management.

**Mainstreaming migration into policies and governance**

As mentioned above, in many countries in Asia and Africa temporary or circular migration represents a major strategy for securing rural and urban livelihoods. This kind of mobility constitutes a precondition for the existence of bi-, multi- or translocational households (Schmidt-Kallert 2009, Steinbrink 2009, Greiner 2008).

\(^3\) In contrast, in most developing countries regions do not constitute formal political or administrative entities.
In the context of circular, seasonal or step-wise migration, cities often figure as places of transit, rather than places of destination (Landau 2010: 9). This means a major departure from the conventional understanding of rural-urban migration as a uni-directional process (from the countryside towards a permanent stay in the city) and has a direct implication for the design of urban policies. For the case of South Africa, Landau posits the need to incorporate migration into key urban governance fields, such as the provision of housing and social services and infrastructure. For instance, mobile population groups require support for transitory housing solutions and assistance for accessing education and health services in multiple sites (ibid: 24f.). Of course, improved data on migration dynamics and demographics\(^4\) constitute a necessary pre-condition for appropriate migration mainstreaming into urban governance and policies.

Governments in the South have traditionally focused on the negative effects of migration, e.g. emphasizing poor rural-urban migrants’ burden on urban service provision (IOM 2008: 188). However, in the last years, this attitude has given way to a more balanced view, in the context of which the actual and potential benefits of migration for individuals and households, but also for communities and (urban) regions are increasingly recognized. As a result, to prop up the benefits and mitigate the negative effects of migration (Tacoli/Mabala 2011: 390), a few governments and non-governmental agents have started with developing strategies connecting migrants’ places of origin and destination. For instance, the government of India has piloted mobile ration cards, by which poor families are enabled to access i.a. subsidized food in more than one location. Formerly, the use of these ration cards was based on proof of residence (ibid: 189). Also in India, the DFID-funded Labour Support Programme provides job-related information and awareness services to migrants from poor tribal areas moving to the wealthier states of Gujarat and Rajastan, thereby reducing their vulnerability in urban destination areas (ibid: 191). And Adhikar, an NGO in the state of Orissa in India, in cooperation with private banks is assisting migrants with affordable and safe services for sending remittances back to their rural home areas (Website Adhikar).

Having said this, in most countries governments are still reluctant to address the needs of their mobile population. Therefore, migrants’ self-organisation e.g. for transferring money and goods towards the rural home areas tends to be most instrumental for sustaining mixed, rural-urban livelihoods. Sustaining existing informal migrant initiatives and/or matching them with ‘formal’ initiatives seems thus to be another promising but until now neglected strategy for supporting mobility-related rural-urban linkages (Dick 2009: 27).

**Adjusting spatial governance units**

Local governance and planning, e.g. of major urban cores fail to respond to the multiple economic, social and environmental concerns cities share with their hinterlands or the linkages between rural towns and their surrounding countryside. Centralized governance, on the other, tends to neglect specific problems and potentials of more peripheral regions and populations. Hence the need for an adjustment of territorial units of governance (sub-national but above-local) and the renewed focus on the “region”.

Inter-communal co-operation constitutes one important instrument of regional governance. Depending on national legislation, this co-operation may be the result of a voluntary association of municipalities or of a redefinition of administration units and borders. The Philippines form an example of the first

---

\(^4\) A number of authors have observed a life cycle-related pattern of rural-urban mobility, in that predominantly children and youth in school age as well as the economically active population resides in the city (Greiner 2008, Steinbrink 2009, Lynch 2005). This leads to particular requirements e.g. for educational infrastructure.
type. According to the national constitution there are no administrative entities between municipalities and provinces. However, the Constitution, as well as the Local Government Code from 1991 explicitly mention the possibility of municipalities to group themselves into larger entities for purposes commonly beneficial to them. Against this background, a number of voluntary metropolitan areas were formed, among these Metro Naga as a voluntary association of Naga City and its nearby municipalities. The main objective of this amalgamation constitutes the achievement of common service delivery and balanced economic growth (Sacendoncillo 2007: 3).

South Africa forms an example of the second type, a nationally mandated redefinition of administrative borders. In the context of the local government reform in the year 2000, the number of municipalities was considerably reduced: from more than 800 to 283. A major motivation of this reform was to overcome spatial divisions from the Apartheid-era; but an additional reason was to adjust administrative borders to economic realities transcending former narrow local government borders (Lange 2001: 77).

Whereas regional or territorial development constitutes an apt governance framework for spatially contiguous rural and urban areas, this does no longer apply if more geographically afar locations are involved, e.g. home and destination areas of rural and urban migrants often stretching over thousands of kilometres. For these areas, the concept of multi-sited governance seems to be more appropriate, in the sense that public and private actors in migrants’ areas of origin and destination cooperate for employment-related information and training, as well as the provision of essential social services and housing (view above, also Landau 2010: 23ff.).

Local and regional economic development

Local or regional economic development constitutes the most frequent strategy to promote urban-rural linkages so far. A major objective is to promote rural economies through the diversification of income sources, beyond those of the primary sector. Furthermore, at least in developing economies, efforts are driven by the idea to link agricultural and non-agricultural (that is, rural and urban) sectors in local and regional production and value chains – and, if possible, to connect emerging “regional clusters” to regional, national or international markets. The projects “Partnership for Local Economic Development” (PARUL/KPEL) in Indonesia and “Rural Urban Partnership Programme” in Nepal constitute examples of such initiatives (view box).

Newer instruments to strengthen the economic potential and integration between rural primary-, secondary- and tertiary sectors tend to have two commonalities. First, they are spatially, instead of sectorally focused. Second, they draw on and promote networks between private and public sectors and civil society or grass roots groups. The approach “Rural Economic and Enterprise Development” (REED), developed with the support of several development co-operation agencies e.g. DFID, is indicative in terms of these characteristics.

REED follows the following implementation steps: First the particular problems and potentials of a certain spatial unit (region defined e.g. through a common socio-cultural history, existing economic linkages and a shared natural resource basis) are analysed. The institutional landscape, as well as degree and quality of infrastructure provision, the existing and potential economic and social capital are equally considered. The intention is to create forward- and backward-linkages based in local or regional primary production, i.a. by enhancing marketing capacities in the regional urban centres (Hutter/Neidhardt 2005: 14).
Creation of business networks for local and regional economic development: PARUL/KPEL in Indonesia

The project “Partnership for Local Economic Development” (PARUL/KPEL) in Indonesia, supported by UNDP and UNHabitat since 1997, aims at creating partnerships for local and regional economic clusters. These are supported by national-level partnerships to connect them to national and international markets.

PARUL/KPEL designed, tested and institutionalized a 13-step approach to identify viable economic clusters and build multi-level partnerships between key Indonesian institutions at local/regional and national levels. It has supported a total of 51 districts with their respective economic clusters, e.g. copra, fishing, shrimps, cashews, handicrafts, emping and coffee. Horizontal partnerships include representatives of local governments, the business sector and civil society who themselves are linked to a network of small-scale producer groups at the sub-district level. Through the project, the cooperation between regions was enhanced. Around 30 new producer associations were created by which small-scale producers gained access to better prices, resources, market conditions and skills development. Also, their negotiation position towards government and private sector stakeholders was strengthened (Website UN-Habitat).

Linking urban and rural development through social mobilization: RUPP in Nepal

The Rural Urban Partnership Programme was started in 1997, as a cooperation project between the Government of Nepal, UNDP and UN-Habitat. Its goal is to secure the livelihoods of the urban and rural poor through local and regional institutional development, community mobilization, enterprise creation and small-scale infrastructure development.

The project conducted a delineation of market regions and market zones, based on existing flows of people and goods that were used as indicators for economic connectivity between settlements. Interventions were then established at the level of municipalities as nodes in between these regions and zones. Besides capacity building of local government officials, the mobilization of households living in close proximity to each other, into so-called Tole Lane Organization (TLOs) constitutes a key landmark of the project. Households organized into the TLOs are able to access training and financial support for enterprise development provided these enterprises are promising for strengthening rural-urban linkages. Examples of entrepreneurial activities include i.a. vegetable and food trading, food processing and handicraft trading. (Momen 2006, Website RUPP)

Land use planning and land management

Borders between cities and their rural environment beyond administrative borders become increasingly blurred. In this context, “urban” land uses (e.g. industrial, commercial, but also low- and high-income at the urban fringe) increasingly enter into conflict with “rural” uses (i.e. agricultural, livestock-holding) and may put at risk natural resources. In many African countries, traditional power structures compete with ‘modern’ ones. Hence, negotiations and management of competing land uses constitutes a key matter of planning at the peri-urban interface and city-regions’ social and environmental sustainability.

Peri-urban land use and management require the cooperation of a white range of stakeholders. Similar to the former fields of action (migration mainstreaming, local economic development, regional management), civil society and public and private stakeholders, as well as different levels of government (local and national) need to be involved. Experiences from Southeast Asia and Sub Sahara-Africa indicate that the role of the nation state is key when it comes to defining or transferring property or usage rights of land. Community interest groups (traditional authorities, residential owners and renters, private enterprises) need to included in order to ensure a durable acceptance of land use regulations.
In Douala, Cameroon, most of the peri-urban land is claimed by traditional authorities. Customary owners are the main providers of land for housing at the urban fringe, however their rights are seldom formerly acknowledged by the State. Against this context, the Mbanga-Japoma Project seeks to reconcile formal and customary development procedures and, in this way, contribute to a more regularised and more affordable peri-urban development. The project is carried out in partnership of public and para-statal institutions, as well as private investors. Traditional authorities are closely associated as well. After providing basic infrastructure, rights for land subdivision, servicing and sale are divided among the developer and customary owners (World Bank 2009: 220).

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, I have called for a more integrated view on rural-urban development and described existing programmes from governments, NGOs and development co-operation supporting governance at the rural-urban interface. Until recently both (urban) development-related research and practice have treated urban and rural areas as separate entities. This approach has not only lead to neglecting the manifold and in some cases (e.g. circular and/or seasonal migration) growing relationships between city and countryside. It has also effectively prevented policies and planning to tap on the developmental potentials of these linkages and at the same time to address their drawbacks and risks.

Therefore, this paper has pointed out some of the potentials and risks of rural-urban linkages and, by using the example of existing projects and programmes in Africa and Asia, suggested starting points for integrated rural-urban governance. These programmes, although differing in the kind of linkages they promote (mixed livelihoods and migration, land use, economic development) and rarely using an explicit language of promoting rural-urban linkages, hold at least two basic features:

First, they use place-based rather than sectoral approaches. Specifically, in view of the need to adjust planning and administrative procedures to changing functional relationships between rural and urban areas, projects or programmes operating at the regional level are proliferating. Functional region-areas in this context may most appropriately be conceived as relatively dense daily life- and economic activity-networks of people in the rural-urban interface. Providing functional areas with corresponding – regional or territorial - governance frameworks allows supporting people’s rural-urban survival economies and at the same time negotiating social and environmental “relations of justice” (Young 2000: 229) in contested peri-urban or semi-rural environments.

Yet, while the concepts on regional or territorial function spaces are quite appropriate for geographically contiguous areas, they do not accommodate the question of how to articulate locations stretching large distances, sometimes even across international borders. This scenario applies to rural and urban areas connected with each other through human mobility. Here the concept of multi-sited governance seems to be more appropriate taking into account that people’s well-being and development prospects on the one side are strongly shaped by developments on the other (view Landau 2010: 22). A small number of programmes e.g. in India for the provision of employment-related as well as financial services between locales in far-flung federal states seem promising in this regard.

Second, in all the programs and projects presented in the paper, the vertical co-operation between government levels (national, state, regional and local) and the horizontal co-operation between several
local or regional stakeholders (public, private, civil society, “traditional”, informal) has proved to be a central element. In the context of decentralisation policies, national and state legislation need to set the framework for delegating decision-making competences and budget scope towards local and regional levels. They also need to define how local and regional initiatives are articulated with (e.g. project approval) processes at the state or national levels. Development co-operation in these cases may have an important role in facilitating the coordination and decision-making processes between stakeholders on different levels, as in the case of PARUL in Indonesia or RUPP in Nepal. And developmental research has an important role in further exploring the relationship between mobility, livelihoods and urban and community development, as well as the concept of multi-sited governance in the sense of an inclusive, people-centred planning and management.

REFERENCES


Satterthwaite, David / Tacoli, Cecilia 2003: The urban part of rural development: The role of small and intermediate urban centres in rural and reginal development and poverty reduction. Rural-urban working papers series, No. 9. IIED. London.


Websites

Adhikar (http://www.adhikarindia.org/MoneyRemitance.php accessed on August 30th 2011)

UNCHS (http://www.unchs.org/content.asp?cid=733&catid=47&typeid=13&subMenuId=0, accessed on August 30th 2011)

RUPP (http://www.rupp.org.np, accessed on August 31st 2011)