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Urban Rural Linkages



Editorial

For a long time, scholars and practitioners interested in urban planning and management worked quite independently from those who were convinced of rural development as the base mechanism for poverty alleviation in the Global South. Institutional classifications and policies strictly differentiating “urban” from “rural” fields of development have further substantiated this dualistic conception. This perception has changed over the last two decades with rural-urban linkages becoming an important topic in development research and in the development policy discourse. An early example for this change was the Istanbul Conference’s Habitat Agenda in 1996 that called for promoting an even-handed and mutually beneficial urban-rural development. In the practical field, several development agencies are now providing financial and technical support to programmes that strengthen economic, mobility-related and trade linkages as well as new governance arrangements between rural and urban areas.

In this TRIALOG issue we place a focus on migration related linkages in order to show that in many countries of the South the living situation of individuals and households can best be understood from an integrated rural-urban perspective. While global statistics and development prognoses suggest progressive urbanization processes implying a complete transition from rural to urban occupations, lifestyles and land uses, individual and family practices tell a different story. Within this context, rural to urban mobility has an important livelihood function for enabling the amalgamation of, for example, rural and urban occupations and assets. Hybrid rural-urban livelihoods, as well as their potential poverty-alleviating effects, have been documented with respect to a number of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. However, other aspects of the rural-urban interface have not been addressed so prominently such as the advantages and disadvantages of rural-urban migrant networks, the relevance of rural-urban mobility for certain development and planning fields as well as the role and impact of rural-urban migration for specific population subgroups.

With this issue of TRIALOG we thus intend to shed light on some of these aspects. The issue opens with an article by **Mi-Ran Choi** discussing the influence of migrant networks on livelihoods in rural India. While from the perspective of migrants and their families, these networks enhance the benefits of migration while attenuating its risks, the article also pinpoints their limited scope of action using this as a rationale for complementary public policies.

The subsequent two contributions discuss gender and age biases in regards to access to migration opportunities and benefits. The article by **Petra Dannecker** addresses temporary labour migration within Asia. The in and out migration movements have a dramatic effect on societies since migrants introduce new patterns of living. Building on the case study of rural

Bangladesh, she describes the social changes from migrating women and men and the gender related notion of future life in the villages. **Emmanuel M.J. Tamanja** reports in his article the findings of a study on how school children, living in a rural deprived locality in northern Ghana, use seasonal rural-urban migration as a livelihood strategy and also to access basic education.

The following four articles address rural-urban migration from the perspective of specific sectors. Herein, the debate on the environment-migration nexus has recently gained much prominence, especially in the discussion of the global impacts of climate change. So far, however, this discussion has remained rather intangible, particularly in respect to specific national or regional contexts. The article by **Benjamin Schraven, Christina Rademacher-Schulz, John Amegashitsi and Asaah Mohammed** thus identifies some important uncertainties related to environmental change and migration, grounding their reflections with experiences from Ghana. While improved communication and transportation technologies tend to go undisputed as facilitators of both temporary and permanent migration, the influence of discrete technologies on rural-urban livelihoods has hardly been studied in-depth. **Saiful Momen**’s article therefore provides empirical evidence on the impact of enhanced mobile telephony technology on rural livelihoods in a de-agrarianising context in Bangladesh. According to his findings, it is only some strata of rural society who benefit from the new technology in terms of improved market access. **Anne Floquet**’s article provides an in-depth analysis of four selected informal rural-urban trade networks in Benin. By disclosing the elementary contribution these networks have had to regional food security, she offers a novel perspective on the potential role of the informal sector for pro-poor development and starting points for supportive policies.

Obviously migration flows depend a great deal on the quality of the transportation networks found within individual countries. This is true of permanent migration but is even more crucial in a world where non-permanent migration flows are the order of the day. **Heiner Monheim**’s essay focuses on the relationship between transportation networks and long- versus short-distance migration, embedding these in reflections on the applicability of migration models in the Global North to mobility experiences in the Global South.

The issue closes with a book review by **Eva Dick** of Doug Saunders’ seminal book “Arrival City” which takes up the relationship between the urban transition and rural-urban linkages from multiple perspectives.

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Urban Rural Linkages

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