

Rural Urbanization and the Development of Small and Intermediate Towns

Brian H Roberts¹

Abstract

This paper explores the dynamics of change and development in rural-urban environments. Urbanization in the context of rural and regional environments can be grouped into two categories: rural urbanization and rurbanization. Rural urbanization is a product of a range of push and pull-factors that result in people from rural-regional areas moving to cities and small and intermediate towns. Many have little choice but to live in small scattered urban settlements in peri-urban areas of cities and towns, or along urban transportation corridors. Rurbanization is a counter-cyclical process to rural urbanization, comprising a small but increasing flow of urban wealthy and diaspora who are buying back and developing in predominantly rural regional towns. This paper commences with a series of definitions that set the context for the discussion of the dynamics and chance in the geography and function of small and intermediate towns. It discusses some current and emerging factors driving people from the land to Small and intermediary towns. Factors like expatriate, foreign and company land grabs and purchases, technological changes in agriculture production, logistics, quality assurance and markets; rural debt, impacts of remittances on local economies; climate change impacts, and the dynamics of labour markets are transforming the landscapes of rural areas in all countries. Small and intermediary cities offer opportunities for subsistence living for a growing marginalized population in the transition from rural to urban living. How to manage development these towns, which are the front line of rural-urban migration, in rapidly urbanizing economies is proving to challenge. Many are becoming poverty traps for people leaving the land either by choice or force. Most cannot go back, nor do not have the capacity or desire to migrate to larger cities. The paper will explore what national and local governments policy responses could be to improve the sustainability of rural urbanization and development in small and intermediate towns, with a focus on developing economies.

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Introduction

The transition of the world's population from rural to urban is something that has occurred rapidly. In less than 100 years, human settlements have gone from being 15% urbanized to 55%. By 2050, urbanization is projected to reach 66% (United Nations, 2014). The growing urban phenomenon has led to the observation that we have become a 'planet of cities' (Angel, 2012). However, not all people living in urban areas live in cities. Many live in small and intermediate towns. The importance of these settlements is overlooked in much of the literature. They are a vital interface between the 46% of the world's population who live in rural areas and the approximate 35% who live in cities of more than 300,000 people.

More than 4000 of the world's settlements have populations greater than 100,000 people (Angel, 2012), but many more urban settlements are smaller. The number of people living in small urban settlements of less than 50,000 ranges between 10 - 20% of national urban populations (occasionally higher), depending on the country and urban settlement density (ESPON, 2006). Some urban settlements are small, with populations of only a few thousand people.

Many small and intermediate towns are experiencing significant urbanization pressures, but others, especially in developed and middle-income economies, are experiencing slow or declining population growth. The depopulation of rural areas and small towns is a global trend that is expected to continue and lead to an absolute decline in rural population by 2020 (United Nations, 2014).

The effect of changing patterns of urbanization in both urban and rural areas has been profound. Increasingly, rural areas must fulfill a multiplicity of functions to support the needs of larger cities. In the past, rural areas were merely suppliers of food, goods, labour and natural resources to cities. Rural areas are also becoming more urbanized in culture and lifestyle. Rural areas have become important markets for cities, providing a broad range of environmental, recreational, retirement, leisure, tourism, cultural, and economic services. Some countries have permitted rural residential subdivision of land, creating lots of 0.5 to 4 ha on the periphery of cities for families and retirees seeking a semi-rural lifestyle close to the city. This pattern of rural-urban living is changing the whole focus and outlook of people living in rural areas.

Managing the development of small and intermediate towns and smaller cities, resulting from rural urbanisation, is very challenging. Many of these urban settlements are the launching stage of the rural-urban migration process that now transcends international boundaries. For some people, these urban settlements are becoming poverty traps; for others they are centres of opportunity. Once people leave rural areas, especially in developing countries, they cannot go back, and many have no

desire to do so. Small and intermediate towns are often seen as the first stage towards securing a more reliable income, security, new skills and improved access to health and education services. This chapter argues that, despite the challenges, small and intermediate towns can have a promising future. To achieve that desired future requires fresh thinking, a new agenda and new models for rural urbanization and development of those towns.

This paper explores the dynamics of change in rural-urban environments in the current context of the rural urbanization development debate. It commences with a series of definitions that help set the context of the discussion that follows. Rural urbanization is a product of push and pull-factors driving people from rural areas to small and intermediate towns. However, these drivers are changing, and new sets of drivers are emerging which are shaped less by local and national factors, and more by external factors. Factors like foreign investment and land grabs, expatriate and diaspora investment; remittance and grant dependency; impacts of remittances on local economies; technological changes in agricultural production, logistics, quality assurance; rural debt, climate change impacts, and the dynamics of labour markets are transforming the landscapes of rural areas in all countries. These external factors will have a very significant effect on the management of and prospects for the sustainable development of small and intermediate towns in the future. Some of the development challenges and opportunities created by the new economic geography of cities and systems of investment, trade and productions are presented.

The paper then explores historical and spatial patterns of the development of small and intermediate towns. As indicated, the economic geography, functions and drivers for the development of smaller urban settlements is changing. Many are less dependent on traditional hierarchical systems population, trade and urban settlement; many are feeding directly into global networks and supply chains. The final part of this paper suggests national and local government policy responses which could be adopted to improve the sustainability of rural urbanization and the expansion and sustainable development of existing small and intermediate towns located on the periphery of metropolitan regions and coastlines.

What Separates 'Urban from Rural.'

'Urban' is a broadly used term. There is no standard global definition of what constitutes 'urban'; the definition varies widely across countries and, in some cases, has changed over time. Urban areas may be classified as having several hundred people to over 50,000 (Hugo et al., 2003, United Nations, 2014). The definition of cities ranges from 20,000 to 100,000. The criteria for what constitutes an urban settlement may be based variously on one, or a combination of, characteristics, such as criteria that classify municipalities as urban; a minimum population threshold; population density; the proportion employed in non-agricultural sectors; the presence of infrastructure such as paved roads, electricity, piped water or sewers; and the presence of education or health services. Urban has also been defined as concentrations of human settlements greater than 400 persons per km² (Demographia, 2015). If this definition were applied universally, the level of urbanization would be considerably more than the current global measure of urbanization.

What separates 'urban' from 'rural' is becoming increasingly blurred. Large peri-urban areas have developed on the outskirts of cities, especially large cities in developing countries, most of which have strong urban characteristics. Rural-urban development associated with lifestyle is a common feature on the outskirts of most North American, European and Australasian cities. Urban 'strip' settlement has spread along road corridors and coastlines, in some cases running for hundreds of kilometres (Nath, 2007). A new phenomenon of urban development corridors, which involve a string of

connected cities, are emerging, often these cross international borders (Roberts, 2014). An example of this is the corridor towns and cities development between Abidjan and Lagos in West Africa (USAID, 2015, UN-Habitat, 2010, Nathan Associates, 2013).

Rural Urbanization

‘Rural urbanization’ is a process involving the transformation of a mainly rural-based subsistence or semi-subsistence lifestyle to one that is more urbanized. There are five dimensions to this process: (i) the increased ratio of non-agricultural labour forces; (ii) the diversification of economic and revenue structure; (iii) the urbanization of lifestyles; (iv) the prevalence of mass media use of modern telecommunications; and (v) the modernization of values and enhancement of health and educational levels through access to services located in urban settlements (Zhijun, 2004). Rural urbanization has become synonymous with policies designed to foster the development of growth poles and agropolitan development, postulated by Friedman and Douglas (1975) 40 years ago. It is also synonymous with Chinese rural industrialization, as an attempt by governments to slow down rural-urban migration (Tan and Ding, 2008, Long et al., 2009).

Rural urbanization involves the progressive expansion and transformation of the urban fringe. Population growth creates demand for land for new housing, industry, and community use that gives cities little choice but to develop agricultural and vacant rural areas or to grow vertically. Factors such as de-industrialization of inner city areas, increased congestion, and land prices result in many jobs moving to the periphery of cities.

Rural urbanization in developing countries results in the sporadic pattern of quasi-urban settlement, where land is used to grow food to supplement income from full, part-time or seasonal work in towns and cities. Most people living in these areas work in the informal sector. Many of these peri-urban areas are the catalyst for future slums where residents squat or rent land or rooms (Davis, 2004). In most cases, residents are poor, with limited education and poor skills. Houses are of poor quality, but over time, dwellings are progressively improved using better construction materials, and smaller micro-enterprises develop to create local employment and a range of service industries.

Rurbanization

‘Rurbanization’ is a phenomenon associated with the recolonization of small and intermediate towns. Many small and intermediate towns have taken on urban characteristics of mixed non-rural based land use activities, and employment. Often, they have a high number of home-based or micro-enterprises, and improved access to services such the internet, reticulated water and waste collection. Rurbanization is a process of rural transformation. It leads to enhanced linkages and migration, where rural activities become more intractably linked to the activities of towns and cities, whether this involves seasonal labour, value-added processing or daily or more regular access to education and municipal services. Rurbanisation “... is a process of altering rural forms with pre-selected urban patterns and lifestyles, which creates new genetically altered rural forms” (Mahajan, 2010).

Rurbanization was recognised in the 1982 French National Population Census as a distinct type of urban form, and a growth phenomenon in migration, changing the rural-urban migration direction to urban-rural (Chapuis and Brossard, 1989). In the context of developed economies, the phenomenon of rurbanization has resulted in the resilience of rural areas. This, in turn, has led to changes in land use, changing demographics of neighbours and regional neighbourhood, agricultural development, tourism, secondary residences, and home stay accommodation. In countries like Vietnam, the latter

has become very popular and a way for small towns to increase the level of income to poor regional communities (ILO, 2012).

The process of 'rurbanization' and is occurring in many countries. Over the past three decades, it has been driven by a generation of nouveau riche urban dwellers and expatriates acquiring property in small and intermediate towns throughout Europe, North America, Russia and Australia. Rurbanization is not restricted to developed economies. Increasingly, developing countries such as India, Brazil, the Philippines and Indonesia are witnessing the growing presence of not-locals buying and constructing ancestral, recreational or semi-retirement homes in rural environments (McGregor, 2014). Rurbanization has positive and negative benefits to small and intermediate towns.

There are two distinct types of rurbanization development. The first is the development of rural-urbanized lifestyle living areas (rural residential) on the periphery or in the hinterland areas of cities and small towns in developed economies. It refers to the group development of dwellings and land that are not used primarily for agriculture (DTPLI, 2013). The second has become associated with non-residents and foreigners purchasing property in small towns and villages in rural Europe, especially Eastern Europe. This leads to the injection of capital into otherwise declining rural communities, the rehabilitation of housing, and the creation of new jobs and cottage industries (Paveliuc-Olariu, 2010, Bailly and Bourdeau-Lepage, 2011).

Differentiating Small and Intermediate Towns from other Levels of Urban Settlement

There is no agreed universal definition for small, medium or intermediate towns. Most countries categorise urban settlements as areas with a population comprised between certain threshold values within a network system of cities. Small and intermediate towns and cities form part of the network. The number of inhabitants that distinguish small and intermediate towns from cities is not consistent. Small and intermediate towns can have populations anywhere between 5,000 and 100,000 people. A population of 100,000 seems to distinguish them from larger urban agglomerations (ESPON, 2006: 32).

In developing economies, urban settlements with between 50,000 and 100,000 people are considered medium towns. In South Africa, a small town is an urban area with a population less than 50,000 (Wessels, 2012). In India, urban populations beyond 100,000 are classified as cities (Kundu and Bhatia, 2001). In Ghana, towns are defined as small, with populations between 5000 and 19,999; medium (20,000-99,999) and large towns (100,000+). A population over 250,000 is considered a city. In advanced economies such as Australia, small towns range from 1,000 and 19,999 (Collits, 2000). Medium size towns range from a 20,000 to 200,000 people, depending on population density and the respective urban system in a country (Kunzmann, 2009).

Intermediate cities have been defined by the United Cities for Local Governments (UCLG) as "located between small rural type settlements and major metropolitan areas" (UCLG, 2013). They are part of national and/or regional urban systems. While they ensure essential services to urban and rural communities, they also provide necessary social services, economic opportunities, and specialized services, such as universities or industries, which are not exclusively local or regional. Intermediate towns are smaller than intermediary cities. Most are regional market centres or junctions of major transport systems. It is probably more useful to consider intermediate towns by their functions, including the provision of services, facilities and infrastructure to their local urban population and that of their surrounding region (Tacoli, 2004). There is significant differentiation in the form, size, function of small and intermediate towns. The functions of these small towns need to be considered

within the broader geographic system of urban settlements (Tacoli, 2004). Many have a critical role to play in the efficient operation of supply chains, food security and cultural and religious services.

For definition purposes in this paper, intermediate towns are those with populations ranging between 5,000 to 100,000 people. Small and medium sized Intermediate size towns are generally considered as those with a population of less than 20,000. In using this definition, there is a recognition that variations outside this range will occur, depending on population density and the respective urban systems in a country. Most of these will play important market centre and logistic services roles for regions or peri-urban areas.

For most developed countries, estimates of the number of people living in small and intermediate towns are available using census data. However, for most developing economies data is much less reliable, since census data is not regular and/or collected for municipalities that have a significant proportion of their population living in rural areas.

Table 1 shows a breakdown of the population share of urban settlements by size groups in Europe in 2005. Around 60% of residents lived in small towns of 50,000 or less. There are big variations between countries. In Slovakia 50% of the urban population lived in towns of less than 50,000; in the Netherlands, it was about 20% (ESPON, 2006). A similar variation occurs in other regions: in Nigeria and Brazil about 20% of the population live in small towns. (Brinkhoff, 2010).

Table 1: Population share of municipalities by size groups in Europe (2005)

Population class	Number of cities/municipalities		Population	
	Absolute	in %	absolute	In %
5,000 – 10,000	10,367	53.8	71,842,291	19.6
10,000 – 20,000	5,390	28.0	72,903,934	19.9
20,000 – 50,000	2,421	12.6	72,735,991	19.8
50,000 – 100,000	679	3.5	46,206,932	12.6
> 100,000	407	2.1	103,124,225	28.1
total	19,264	100.0	366,813,373	100.0

Source: (ESPON, 2006)

Drivers of Rural Urbanization

Factors that drive the rural urbanisation process are varied and complex. The historical drivers of rural urbanisation have been documented extensively as far back as the 1930s (Heberle, 1938) and include lack of economic opportunity, land tenure, security of income, fleeing from violence and civil unrest (Fields, 1972, Mabogunje, 1970, Kumari, 2014). However, the most significant factor contributing to rural urbanisation is the search a more reliable income.

The causes, rate, and impacts of the rural urbanization process on the development of small and intermediate towns vary significantly between countries and regions. The process can be disrupted or even thrown into reverse in the case of civil unrest and war, as occurred in Cambodia in the 1980s. In times of crisis, the process can often be accelerated, as is occurring in refugee-impacted countries like Pakistan, Jordan and Kenya, where unrest in neighbouring countries is driving people rapidly across international borders into towns and cities.

While historical drivers of rural urbanization will continue to prevail, new factors are emerging which are pushing and pulling rural residents into small and intermediate towns. For many of these migrants, the move to small and intermediate towns is a starting point for migration to larger cities or international migration. The following discusses some of the most significant push-pull factors in rural

urbanisation, addressing some of the emerging external drivers, which will become even more prominent in the future.

Push-Pull Factors Associated with Rural Urbanization

Push-pull factors driving rural urbanization have been studied extensively for decades (Fields, 1975, Mabogunje, 1970). The push factors that force people to leave rural areas for small towns and cities can be both locally or externally generated. Table 2 shows some push-pull factors driving rural urbanization. The most significant push factor is a lack of employment, especially for those wanting to engage in non-rural activities. Rural incomes per capita are often as little as one-third of urban incomes (Shi and Chu-liang, 2007), and are falling. However, there are a growing number of external factors pushing rural people from the land to the towns and cities. These include large-scale commercial farming (Smalley, 2013), diaspora, companies buying up rural property, land grabbing (Magdoff, 2015), and climate change (Laczko and Aghazarm, 2009).

Table 2 Push-Pull Factors Driving Rural Urbanization

	Local Factors	External Factors
Push Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonality of income • Land disputes • Fragmentation of land ownership • Water and land rights • Overpopulation • Debt • Violence against women • Security issues • Demographics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale commercial farming • Modernization of agriculture • Diaspora buying up property • Land grabbing • Famine • Climate change
Pull Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to services • Employment opportunities • Education • Higher standards of living/higher wages • Better healthcare and education • Political and religious freedom • Access to capital • Family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher education • Stepping stone to national & international migration and careers • Access to drugs supply chains • Internet services • Access to business networks

Source: Author (2015)

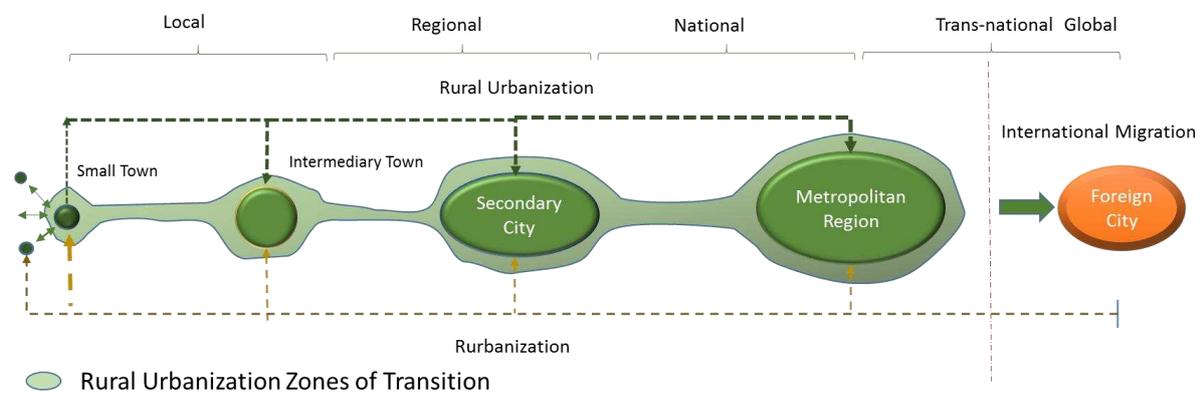
There are significant pull factors attracting rural residents into small and particularly intermediate cities (Hare, 1999, Sovani, 1964). Pull factors, especially the prospects of employment and income, some of which is repatriated in the form of remittances, tend to be more powerful than push factors in rural urbanisation (Gmelch, 1980). For many rural residents, seasonal employment in urban areas is crucial to supplement income during off-seasonal rural work related to agriculture and fishing activities (Basu and Kashyap, 1992, Reardon et al., 2007). Other external pull factors are emerging, such as intermediate cities offering the initial step in access to international migration, drug markets and career development prospects.

Rural Urbanization and Rurbanization Development Process

Many different patterns are associated with the process of rural urbanization, and the patterns and flows vary significantly between countries and regions. Some rural residents migrate only a short distance from their birthplace or childhood residence to a small or intermediate town. Some will migrate to local towns and smaller regional cities where many settle temporarily or permanently in the urban fringe zone, or along the major arterial roads serving the town. Others will embark upon a series of staged migrations from villages to small towns to metropolitan regions and possibly migrate overseas. Most migrants settle in inner cities or rural urbanized areas as close as possible to employment or family support systems.

Figure 1 shows the rural urbanization (move from rural to urbanised areas) and rurbanization (move from urban to rural areas) flow and development patterns that result from migration and population growth of urban settlements in most developing economies. The different patterns of rural urbanization development are discussed later in this paper.

Figure 1 Rural Urbanizations and Rurbanization Development Process.



Source: Author (2015)

The 'rural urbanization' development process starts at the small town level and becomes progressively intense as more people move to metropolitan regions, where the process ends. The 'rurbanization' process can begin anywhere in the hierarchy of urban centres. Foreigners, investors, the nouveau riche or the diaspora buy into rurbanized land markets and development in Metropolitan peri-urban areas or hinterlands, or into small towns and villages. The impact of this group of rural lifestylers is to urbanize the architecture, culture, way of life, and land-use where ever they go.

Evolution of Rural Urbanization

Debate continually arises behind the reasoning and patterns of rural urbanisation associated with small and intermediate cities. Various theories have placed importance on war, plague, medical advances, trade, technology and religion on the development of cities and towns (LeGates and Stout, 2011). Urban settlements, in the form of hamlets and villages, have existed for more than 10,000 years. It was not until 5,000 years ago, that the first significant towns and cities emerged. Towns and cities primarily developed as centres of trade, political and religious importance, and defence. For these to develop, regions in which they were located had enough surplus of raw materials, food and manufactured products to support trade and a relatively large population. Medieval cities and towns had a history of urbanisation developed upon security and trade. Florence, Barcelona and Dubrovnik,

are all port trading cities surrounded by large barricaded walls or water to protect citizens from outside attack (Mumford, 1961a).

Until the industrial revolution, less than 10 % of the world's population was urbanized, with the pattern of urbanization taking the form of hundreds of villages and towns. Empires and kingdoms throughout history have established and developed new towns and decentralised centres to rule and conquer. The spatial pattern and size of these were largely organic, determined by climate and the harvesting capacity surrounding open lands and forests to feed and service the threshold population. Until the industrial revolution the size of the urban settlement and pattern of urban-rural landscapes changed little. By the beginning of the 18th Century, both the pattern and size of towns and cities began to change rapidly (Mumford, 1961b, Hoskins, 1955).

The industrial revolution transformed the rural-urban patterns of settlement in Europe and North America. The historic road and trade route patterns shaped much of the early rural urbanization pattern. Later the canal systems and the railways were to shape the pattern of rural-urban settlement and urbanization process throughout the globe. The transformation of urban-rural settlement patterns began with the establishment of factories utilizing local resources for processing and manufacturing. These expanded with the growth of canals, inland rivers, seaports and railways. Villages grew into industrial towns and cities. The peripheral rural settlements began transforming, depopulation of rural areas began to occur, and expanded villages near industrial centres began the transformation process of being absorbed into the city. This process of settlement continued, with urban densities increasing until the private automobile age when everything changed again.

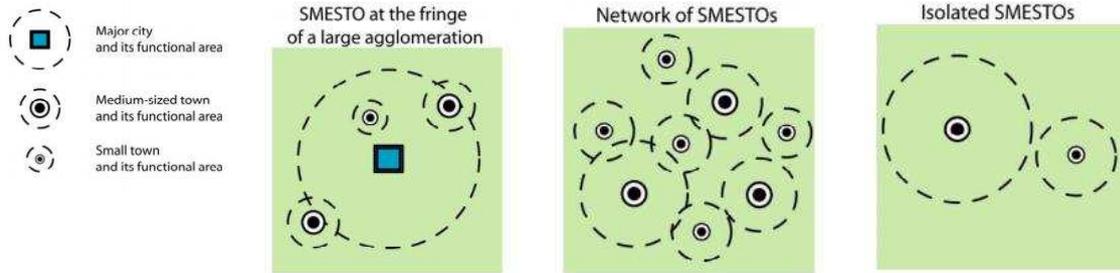
The garden cities movement and the automobile had a significant influence on the planning and development of towns and cities, especially the development of new or expanded towns and new capital cities. Most started out very small and took a long time to develop. However, Washington, Canberra and Islamabad are all examples of 'new towns' or planned communities strategically designed to create spatially organised development and avoid ad hoc growth.

Typology of Small and Intermediate Towns

The historical patterns of urbanization have led to a range of typologies of towns and cities. Christaller's (1963, 1933) *Central Place Theory* was used to explain a hierarchy of urban settlements in terms of the classical typology of human settlements. A European Commission study (ESPON, 2006) identified three basic typologies for small and medium-sized towns (SMESTOs) (See Figure 2): fringe; network; and isolated small and intermediate cities.

The first type of SMESTO pattern of town development is located at the fringe, peri-urban and immediate hinterland zones of large metropolitan agglomerations. They form a cluster or polycentric pattern of new towns (Choe and Laquian, 2008). Most are functionally part of metropolitan economies. They have strong transport, economic and social linkages with the core of the metropolitan region. Many of these small and intermediate towns are dormitory urban settlements. Some are gated communities; others are formal or informal settlements. Cities like Jakarta, Santiago and Lagos, have many of these settlements. Attempts at developing new towns have met with mixed results, with many facing social problems and difficulties in attracting private investment and job creation. Others started as small isolated settlements, like Soweto, and have grown into very large cities which have been absorbed by growing metropolises.

Figure 2 Three main types of SMESTOs



Source: ESPON (2006)

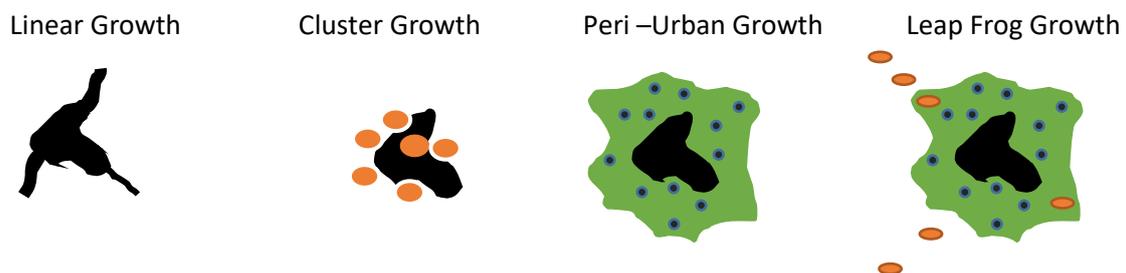
The second type of SMESTO is primarily a network of small or medium-sized towns with economic and governance linkages to a secondary city. This type of SMESTO is located within the regional orbits of secondary cities and they are not necessarily dominated by any single metropolitan area. They have their own economic and labour market sub-catchments within the confines of a secondary city. Individually, however, they have insufficient mass to develop a diversified range of specialised and competitive activities (ESPON, 2006:65).

Finally, isolated SMESTOs such as fishing harbours, mining or tourism town destinations, generally in low populated regions are a special case. Some of these involve small nests of links to urban centres tied closely to a single economic activity. Others may play a key role in national and international harvesting, production and extraction of highly valued export products and services. Examples of these are Alice Springs in central Australia for tourism, and Iquique, in northern Chile, which is an important service centre and port for Chile's mineral export industry.

Changes to the Typology of Small and Intermediate Towns

The above patterns of development are representative of the historical patterns of better planned rural urbanization. For much of the developing world, this is not the case. Rural urbanization involving small and intermediate towns is generally sporadic, not well planned, lacking basic services, and with poor access. In developing countries, there are four forms of urban growth: linear, cluster, peri-urban and leapfrog rural urbanization development (Figure 3). These spatial patterns of growth can be studied using geographic information systems (GIS) and satellite imagery.

Figure 3: Linear, Cluster and Leapfrog Urban Development Patterns



Author (2015)

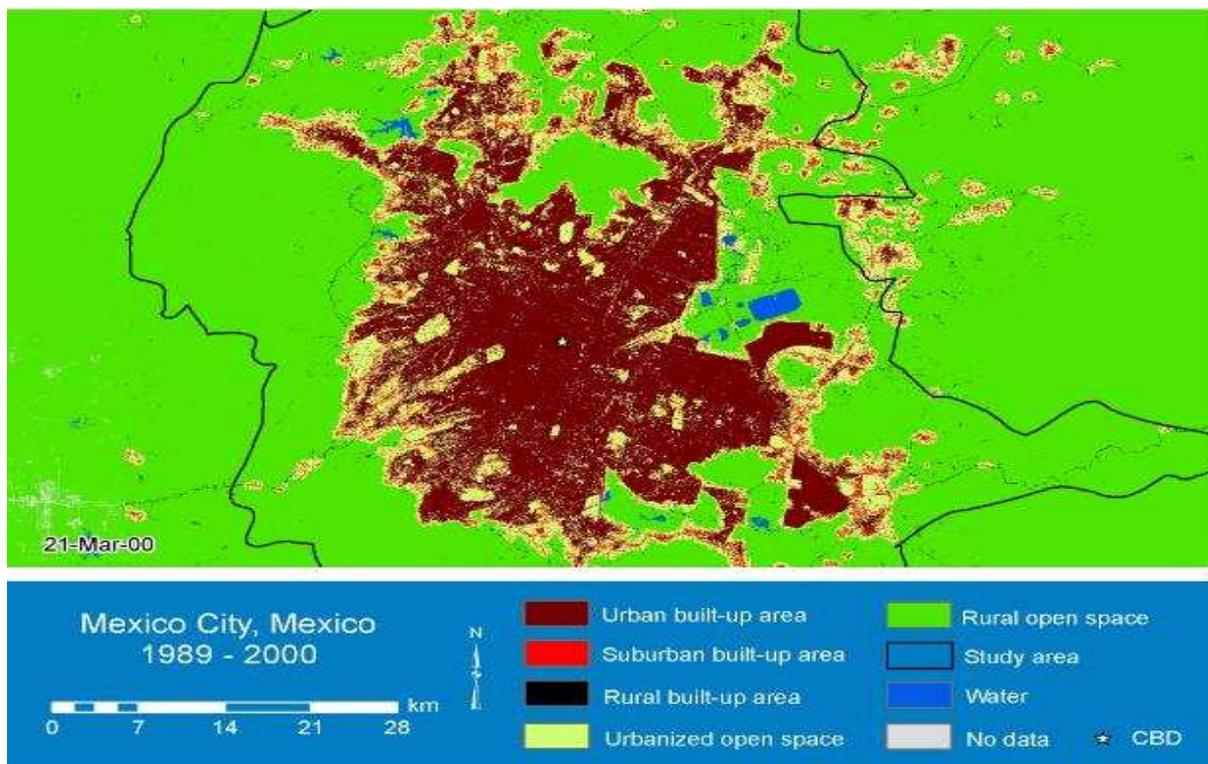
Linear development is the continuous growth of development along highways servicing metropolitan regions, intermediate cities, secondary cities and small towns. It is one of the oldest and most typical growth patterns of urbanisation.

One of the growth patterns common to most geographic regions is cluster development. Typically, cluster developments are rapidly occurring urban developments built with no design or formation. Many take the form of expanded villages and towns. Cluster developments often occur as slum

developments, peri-urban developments, and market towns (European Cluster Observatory, 2015). Cluster development, because of rapid urban growth, tends to be organic and lacks proper access, infrastructure, amenities and services. The process generally begins with the development of a few poorly constructed dwellings. As the development grows, additional structures are added and, as the process continues, a cluster develops. Some clusters develop as enclaves, while other develop as enclaves, encroaching into rural areas.

Peri-urban development is characterised by low to medium density dispersed urban development with low connectivity and sometimes large areas of vacant or low-level production agricultural land between settlements (Almeida, 2005). Densities will typically be below 1,000 persons per km², although, in some countries, for example, Bangladesh, this can be very much higher. Most peri-urban areas are characterised by very poor urban services, most without water and sanitation, with poor quality access roads and houses, and lacking schools and other community services. In many cases, urbanization occurs around stand-alone factories. Farming activities in these areas can be very productive, but plot sizes are generally small with insufficient yield to make a living. Commercial activities are mainly family owned stalls engaged in selling consumables. As these areas begin to infill, small-scale manufacturing, and a range of higher-level services and transport facilities develop. While peri-urban development is most commonly associated with metropolitan regions and secondary cities, it does occur in smaller towns and cities, especially where national overall population densities are high, such as in many Asian countries.

Map 1 Leapfrogging and Peri-urban Development Mexico City



Source (Angel, 2012)

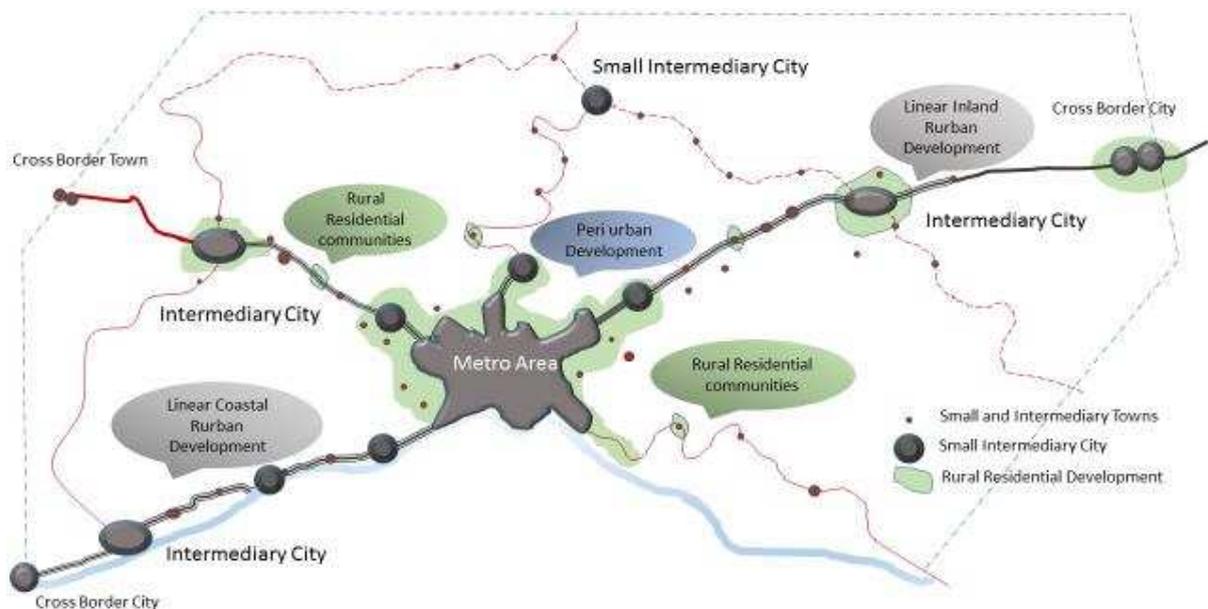
Leapfrog development is a common feature of urbanization, with villages providing the catalyst for the development of towns. Many of these later grow into large cities, e.g., Alexandria, and Soweto in Johannesburg. Leapfrogging of small town settlement often moves well beyond the peri-urban, into the hinterland. Map 1 shows the leapfrogging of small town and city development around Mexico

City. Leapfrogging occurs to a lesser extent in small and medium size towns and cities. In some cases, leapfrogging is part of a planned policy associated with refugee and disaster resettlement. Leapfrogging involving small town rural urbanization occurs in most countries, but in rapidly developing cities, it mainly tends to be unmanaged.

A New Geography of Small and Intermediate Towns

The patterns of small and intermediate town development discussed above are a reflection of the historical and current economic geography. A new economic geography (NEG) (World Bank, 2009) is shaping the typology of small and intermediate towns. This NEG is occurring as the result of improved transport and communications and the internationalization of trade and investment, and the ease of travel. As the result of this development, new typologies and patterns of small and intermediate towns are emerging. These include expanded villages surrounding metropolitan and secondary cities, linear towns, and globally networked systems of intermediate towns. A brief summary of these emerging types of small and medium cities is described below and illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Emerging Typologies of Small and Intermediate Towns



Source Author

Corridor Small and Intermediate Towns

Linear urban development (strip development) spreading along highways away from towns is not new. Many cities expand this way. Strip development is the unplanned spread of roadside development. It occurs initially in rural areas where development is created fronting onto major arterial roads. Development grows in a linear pattern following highways and arterials and can cause significant problems within communities (Verbeek et al., 2014). Strip urban development is attracted to major road transport routes linking larger cities, or close to border crossings. Rural urbanization along corridors connecting small towns into a continuous linear urban development corridor also occurs along rivers, canals and coastlines. It now extends across borders, connecting small and intermediate towns into a network system of connected cities stretching out over thousands of kilometres.

The Scandinavian-Mediterranean Corridor is the longest of the Nine Core Network Corridors within Europe (ETC, 2014). The Scandinavian-Mediterranean corridor plays a critical link in connecting northern and southern European economies. The route crosses the Baltic Sea from Finland, passes through Sweden, Germany, the Alps and Italy. It connects economic centres and ports such as Helsinki, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Berlin, Rome and Valetta; Scandinavia to southern Italy and Malta. Dozens of small and intermediate towns are located along the corridor. Many of these towns are benefiting from small and medium firms locating along the corridor, capitalising on labour skills, niche industries and services that feed into manufacturing and food processing supply chains distributed along the corridor. Such corridors are developing rapidly in West Africa between Lagos and Abidjan, South America, between Brazil and Chile (Mercosur), Tijuana and Vancouver (USA Interstate Highway 5), and in India between Delhi and Mumbai.

The continuous and linking development of towns in a strip corridor of urban development, however, is a more recent phenomenon of rural urbanization. Corridor rural urbanization, linking together dozens of small and intermediate towns is the product of the automobile age and improved roads. These chains of towns vary in size and spread over hundreds or thousands of kilometres of national and international highways and economic development corridors. In his review of slums, David (2004) notes “Lagos, moreover, is simply the biggest node in the shanty-town corridor of 70 million people that stretches from Abidjan to Ibadan: probably the largest continuous footprint of urban poverty on earth”. These corridor shanty towns owe their existence less to the rural economy than to the opportunities created by being able to access markets relatively easily by capitalising on unused freight capacity in containers, trucks or wagons transported along the urban corridors.

Tourism and recreation are often major driving factors in the development of coastal corridor small and intermediate towns. Examples of these can be seen along the Mediterranean coastline, in the USA, Australian and South African coastlines and in some of the emerging middle-income economies such as Sri Lanka, Chile and Vietnam. The effect of coastal linear small and intermediate towns can be enormously destructive to coastal ecosystems, landscapes and natural resources. Construction materials are extracted without permits; drainage systems are impeded, causing localised flooding; development often occurs along the high tide level and encroaches on road corridors, adding to localised traffic congestion.

Rural Residential Lifestyle Development (Rurbanisation) in Small and Intermediate Towns

Rural residential lifestyle development in small and intermediate towns, known as ‘rurbanization’ is the product of the growing nouveau riche who live in large cities, expatriates and foreigners making lifestyle choices to purchase rural residential land on the periphery of large cities and towns as leisure, semi-retirement or family ancestral homes. Many invest in the restoration of houses in villages, country towns and small cities. Rural residential or small ranch-style living in the peri-urban fringe, coastal areas and islands (often in gated communities) developed in the USA, Australia and Europe and is now occurring in many developing countries. Throughout Asia and Latin America wealthy urbanites, the diaspora, and expatriates are acquiring rural land and property in older towns and redeveloping these for urban style living.

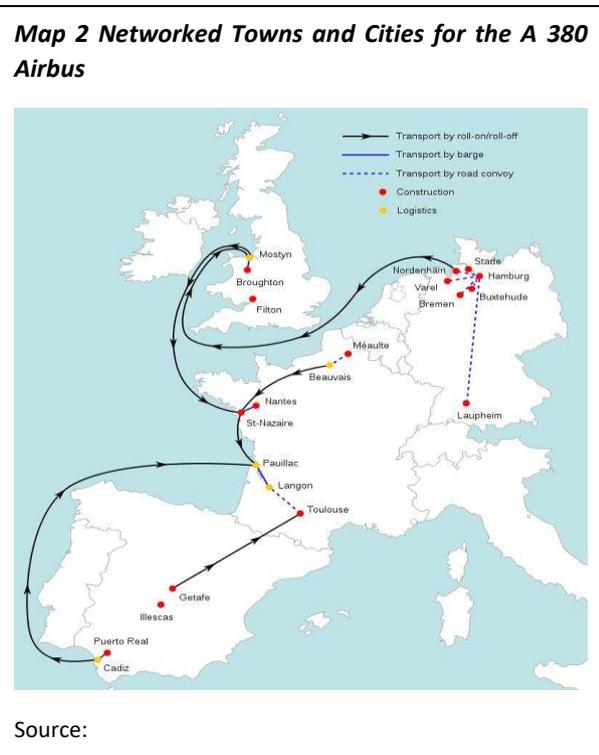
Many rural communities and local governments have welcomed these new developments in poor rural towns and cities, as they create many construction, domestic and service industry jobs. However, they also produce severe distortions in rural and regional town land markets making the purchase of land unaffordable to locals; they create societal divisions; restrict access to common and customary lands as areas are fenced off, and they create a long distance commuter population. In many

situations, this transient population is seasonal; it creates many seasonal jobs, but high levels of unemployment and crime during the farming off-season. The ruralization of many small towns and intermediate cities has been beneficial, as many people settle and establish retirement enterprises that create jobs that are higher value adding and sustainable.

Networks of Small and Intermediate Towns

A new phenomenon is emerging as the result of the internationalisation of global production and the supply chain systems of networked intermediate towns. Some networked intermediate towns are university, technology, and advanced services centre towns, which are engaged in networks of cooperation and collaboration in knowledge sharing, science, business, and research and development. The emergence of networked towns and cities is related to glocalization, a term used to describe the way cities and towns are adapting locally to capture opportunities in global markets. In some cases, intermediate towns are collaborating to overcome economies of scale and barriers to entry into markets.

An example of this is Networking of small and intermediary towns with systems of cities associated with supply chain linkages is the production of the Airbus A380. Map 2, shows the towns and cities engaged in logistics and production systems for this aircraft, from four countries and 19 intermediate towns. Several key inputs into the supply chain for the aircraft's production are in small towns, e.g. Broughton in the UK (population 5,974) and Illescas in Spain (population 15,700). Specialized cross-industry clusters have emerged from the links between these cities. This network of interconnected cities and towns supporting the manufacturing of the A380 has resulted in spin-off benefits in universities and industries in these small and intermediate towns.



Regional Geography of Rural Urbanization

The many changes that are occurring in rural and peri-urban areas are leading to different patterns of urban development in developed, middle income and developing countries. Table 3 summarises some of the characteristics of the new geography of small and intermediary city developments. Many of these will go on to develop into larger cities and eventually be absorbed into expanding urban metropolises. Each of these developments raises significant challenges for local governments in the management of land for urban and rural use, provision of infrastructure and services, economic development and employment creations and environmental impacts. For the large rapidly growing cities in developing economies, the uncontrolled or poorly managed development of small and intermediary towns in peri-urban areas will become especially challenging. It is in these and along expanding urban corridors that most of the new urban poor will live and work in the future.

Table 3: New Geography of Rural Urbanization in Developed, Middle Income and Developing Economies

	Developed Economies	Middle-Income Economies	Developing
Metropolitan Regions	Rural residential lifestyle Expanded villages urban satellite and new towns Clusters city development Expanded villages	Dispersed peri-urban development Linear development Expanded villages	Peri-urban development Gated communities Linear corridor development
Secondary Cities	Expanded villages Lifestyle areas	Dispersed peri-urban development Linear development	Dispersed peri-urban development
Intermediate Cities	Expanded villages	Linear development	Fringe development
Small Towns	Peri-urban agriculture Seasonal transition labour market towns	Linear development Backland development along road corridors	Linear development Rurbanization along road corridors

Regional Differences in Rural Urbanization

Regional differences in patterns of rural urbanization are occurring in Asia, Europe, Latin America, Africa, North America and Australasia. Where national population densities are over 300 per km², e.g. Bangladesh, Vietnam, the Philippines and Burundi, the patterns are much tighter in scale, and the rate of rural urbanization is high. As countries become more urbanized the greatest pressure for rural urbanization is experienced in peri-urban areas of larger cities and along urban corridors. Anecdotal evidence from global mapping work undertaken by Angel et al. (2012) suggests that corridor development is growing most rapidly in African countries, while peri-urban and leap frogging is more widespread in Asia and Latin America. This is partially explained by the level of infrastructure and development of cities in these regions. In Europe, North America and Australasia the focus has been on planned expanded villages and new towns.

Challenges of Rural Urbanization

Small and intermediate towns are experiencing significant challenges as the result of the demographic, economic and social change. The challenges facing smaller urban settlements vary significantly between countries and regions. Some of these are explored in other chapters. A conference paper on South African small towns provides a good summary of problems associated with rural urbanization common to the development of small towns (Wessels, 2012), which are common to many countries experiencing rapid urbanization.

Table 4 Challenges and Features of Rural Urbanization in Small and Intermediate Towns

CHALLENGES	Features
Local Economic Development	Limited informal employment opportunities Lack of venture capital for business development Impact of expatriate investment on land values Poor revenue recovery by LGUs A high level of leakage of purchasing power, to larger centres
Social-Cultural Development	Population declining more rapidly Urban and rural poverty Paucity of education and social services High rents and extortions Drugs and Crime Domestic violence, particularly against women and dissemination
Physical Development	Unmanaged peri-urban development Poor roads Future road and utility corridors not protected

	Gravitation of commercial development to highways Linear townships Slum settlements
Environmental Management	Water pollution Land degradation and contamination Uncontrolled disposal of waste Drawdown on water tables
Governance	Poor urban governance and management Weak or no security of tenure Lack of capital for development Decentralization and corruption
Behavioural	Rural habits and practices not appropriate to urban living

Source: Author (2015)

Table 4 lists some of the more common challenges and features of rural urbanization. Appropriate local solutions are needed to address many of these. For others, national policy and program initiatives are necessary to support rapidly growing or declining small and intermediate towns. Examples of good practice can be found which support the development of rural urbanisation in small and intermediate towns (Wessels, 2012, Hundey, 2004); some of these are presented in other chapters of the book.

Policy Responses to the Challenges of Rural Urbanization

Rural urbanization is an unstoppable process. More than 1.6 billion people are expected to be added to the population of cities over the next three decades. Most of these will be migrants from rural areas, smaller towns and cities. The population of smaller towns and cities is expected to grow at less than 1%, but this still means some 100 to 150 million people will be added to the population of urban settlements of less than 100,000 people. Almost all of the development of small and intermediate towns will occur in developing countries. Most of this development will occur in peri-urban areas and urban development corridors along major transport routes.

The challenges of addressing rural urbanisation will require a range of policy responses to be developed and implemented by different levels of government; these must be geographically focused. These will vary significantly between countries depending on geographic location, the historic level of development and responsiveness of urban governance systems. A substantial amount of research and study has been undertaken into appropriate policies for addressing the challenges of rural urbanisation. Table 5 outlines national and local policy responses that governments, working with local business and communities, could apply to support the many problems facing the development of small and intermediate cities.

Table 5: Policy Responses to the Challenges of Rural Urbanization in Small and Intermediate Towns

POLICY RESPONSES	National Policy Responses	Local Policy Responses
Economic	Local capital markets and banks Spatial budgeting Remittances to local economic development (LED) National LED policies Small competitive grants	Participatory budgeting LED Planning 3D printing
Infrastructure	Small grants funding projects for local economic and social infrastructure	Project prioritisation Public-private sector projects Community-based partnerships Asset management

Social Cultural	Developing social capital and social business urban-rural linkages	Social capital development through the diaspora
Development	National urban policies	Local land use plans
Environmental	Green energy policy	Green energy projects
HRMD	National LGU training programs in urban management and LED	Online learning
Governance	Policy and Fiscal decentralization and devolution Funds for asset management	Collaborative governance Participatory budgeting
Behavioural	Entrepreneurial and quality management attitudes	Codes of conduct

Source: Author (2015)

Opportunities to support the Development of Rural Urbanization and Rurbanisation

While small and intermediate towns face many development challenges, there are many opportunities to support their development. The emergence of rurbanization has injected capital, knowledge and new jobs into declining regions in Europe, North America, Australasia, and in some larger developing economies it has breathed new life into small and intermediate towns and rural areas. Unfortunately, not all regions have benefited from this, and the impact of the new, generally wealthier arrivals, on local population has had some negative consequences.

In rural urbanized areas, there are many development opportunities for small and intermediate towns, but the realisation of these will require local governments to manage and develop the enabling environments to encourage innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity. This is crucial to the development of new enterprises to help reduce the level of informal employment and poverty, to ensure greater job security and to bring greater stability to these types of urban settlement.

Ways that small and intermediate towns can become more prosperous and vibrant includes fostering the development of industry networks and clusters to create economies of scale. This approach has been very successful for small town economic development in the Hanoi region of Vietnam. Many small scale enterprise firms and family businesses there are involved in the development of tourism, travel, agricultural and recycled products for domestic consumption and export (Hoang Nam et al., 2009).

Technology has the potential to provide many formal job opportunities and development of locally based enterprises. This is occurring as the result of the emerging Third Industrial Revolution (Rivkin, 2011). Using three-dimensional (3D) printing, recyclable materials such as plastics and metals can be used to produce many spare parts and products locally at minimal costs. Technology-based production has the potential to create many local jobs and reduce the pressure on the population of small towns and cities to migrate in search of job opportunities. The need to scale-up a level to technology-based and e-based employment in small towns of developing countries is critical to their development and growth. Rwanda is an example of a country that is taking the development of technology seriously, with the government rolling out broadband to regional towns in recognition that the future development of the country's regions will be driven by technology-based services and manufacturing (IT News Africa, 2014).

Rural Urbanization and Rurbanisation and Sustainable Development

The extent to which rural urbanization and rurbanization are sustainable varies between countries and the type of urban settlement. Uncontrolled rural urbanization resulting in unplanned, unmanaged and poorly serviced peripheral urban and peri-urban settlement and development is not sustainable. This form of development results in land being used inefficiently, loss of vegetation and soil. It has a significant impact on flooding and pollution where streams and rivers run through large urban areas. It is unplanned and unmanaged peri-urban settlement that has such a devastating impact on cities like Jakarta and Bangkok every time it rains heavily.

However, managed rural urbanization can be beneficial by creating new and more diversified jobs, and supplementing rural incomes and better services. These benefits can help reduce levels of rural poverty, and slow the rate of forced or push migration from rural areas. Slowing the rate of urban-rural migration is beneficial in enabling small and intermediary towns to catch up on the backlog of urban services, especially if the jobs created are sustainable. However, sustainable job creation relies on inflows of investment capital into rural and regional towns, which calls for good governance and planning. Many smaller regional towns and cities in developing economies do not have these capacities. Build capacity that supports good governance and better planning in small and intermediary towns is vital to the sustainable development of both rural and regional areas.

Rurbanization can support the sustainable development rural and regional areas and towns, provided it is well managed and does not distort property values. Where the latter occurs, it is not sustainable. The advantage of rurbanization is that it injects capital and creates jobs into rural and regional areas that are in decline, with falling and aging populations. It can make a significant contribution to small and intermediary town resilience by introducing creative industries, new types of services jobs, technologies and build social capital. While many residents moving to these areas are transient, they provide links and new opportunities for resident communities to gain access to services, information and market opportunities they might not otherwise have.

The extent to which rural urbanization and rurbanization are sustainable depends upon the rate and scale of migration flows and the absorption capacity of small and intermediary towns in regional and peri-urban areas to create jobs, infrastructure, housing and community services commensurate with demand. For most development countries, the rates of rural-urban migration have been too high for local governments to manage, and the pattern and scale of urbanization are not sustainable. This does not suggest small and intermediary towns cannot be made more sustainable. They can: but it requires local governments to play a much stronger role in managing urbanization. Many do not have the willingness or resources to do so.

Action Agenda for Small and Intermediate Towns

The analysis of patterns, trends and challenges of rural urbanisation outlined above, calls for an action agenda at national and regional local government levels to improve the development prospects and management of small and intermediate towns. In most countries, national urban development policies give inadequate attention to the role and significance of smaller urban settlements. Small and Intermediate towns are important hubs in national and international industry supply chains, but at the same time, they are coming under a range of pressures from external factors that will have a significant impact on their development which many do not have the capability or capacity to manage.

In setting out an action agenda for small and medium intermediate towns national and provincial local governments should give priority to the following:

- Stronger administrative and physical support for decentralisation, and an efficient functioning national system of urban settlements
- Capacity building for small town local governments to develop the strategic infrastructure necessary to support more dynamic, risk averse and resilient local economies
- Ensuring that all rural urbanisation development is managed through transparent, accountable and open public administration systems.
- Enhancing value chains in urban, rural linkages
- Retention of local capital markets
- Capturing value from rising property markets to generate revenue for local infrastructure and services investment
- Protection of urban corridors for infrastructure and protection of public lands for community services from encroachment by urbanisation
- Collaborative governance systems that share resources between networks and clusters of smaller towns and cities to create economies of scale and overcome barriers to entry into new markets for local products and services
- Reforming fiscal and administrative decentralization to give LGUs greater responsibility for financial management and direct revenue generation
- Improving logistics systems, especially telecommunications, intermodal facilities and Internet-based services
- HRDM, social and cultural capital development that support the competencies and capacities of public institutions, business, family enterprises to innovate, become more efficient and glocalise the focus of business activities
- Creating green energy and renewable resource economies
- Improving environmental and habitat restoration and management of peri-urban habitats

Conclusion

Small and intermediate cities are a crucial element of urban-rural systems which, increasingly, are transcending international borders. Historically, small and intermediate towns performed localised functions in supporting the needs of secondary regional cities and national primate cities. The internationalisation of many economies and advancements in communications have enabled some small and intermediate cities to develop more specialised functions and participate actively in global merchandise and services trade.

The rapid urbanisation of many countries has put significant pressures on the development of national systems of cities, particularly the larger cities. Small and intermediate towns are often the first stage in a migration process to larger cities as people seek better jobs, quality of life and access to urban services. With an increasing number of people living in urban settlements, rural populations will begin to decline sharply over the next two decades. This will place significant pressures on many small and intermediate towns in regional/rural areas to retain jobs, provide essential services and foster new economic development opportunities. This calls for creative solutions, including new collaborative governance and business arrangements to remain competitive, employment creation, retention and development of human capital, and levels of service demanded by increasingly educated and inclusive societies.

For small and intermediate cities developing in peri-urban and corridor developments, it is essential that local governments ensure these develop the foundations for supporting their expansion into larger cities. Currently in most developing and middle-income countries, rural urbanisation in these

areas is poorly managed. Issues such as protecting urban corridors from encroachment for future public community use are vital to ensuring these areas remain functional and accessible as the urbanisation process intensifies. Peri-urban areas and corridors are where most of the world's future urban poor will live. It is essential that they have access to the services needed to create a functioning, efficient and innovative businesses that can create local employment and generate wealth which can be capitalised to invest in housing and local environmental improvements that would lead to better health, well-being and quality of life.

The next two decades' present significant challenges for rural urbanisation and development of small and intermediate towns. If they are to have a sustainable future, these towns must learn to take greater control and improve the management of their development; those experiencing the pressures of urbanisation must develop the systems to manage it. Towns that face declining population and loss of business must learn how to become resilient, by adopting more collaborative and integrated approaches to development. These towns have a future in the emerging Third Industrial Revolution, but to prosper, their administration systems and local populations must be willing to embrace change and engage more globally on the products and services they produce.

The challenges facing small and intermediate towns call for an agenda for policy change and development practices to the way government approaches rural urbanization and rurbanization. Some of the changes required to ensure the sustainability and livelihood of small towns and cities will be difficult. Change will challenge many traditional beliefs, ideas, customs and practices. Teaching the communities of small and intermediate towns how to adjust to and embrace change is a critical message to be presented to Habitat III in 2016. For too long the needs of smaller urban settlements have been overlooked, as priority is given to the concerns and problems of megacities and metropolitan regions. Their future prosperity is dependent on having an efficient, functioning system of cities, small and intermediate towns.

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