

Rural-Urban Interaction

Re-formulating the conceptual framework...

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Introduction

Objective

To articulate a conceptual model of the range of rural-urban interactions as a unifying theoretical context for the work of Theme 8.3 (Urban-rural resource flows, resilience and rural service delivery).

Development of Ideas on Urban-Rural Interaction:

- Growth pole theory (Perroux) , and "spread effects" very influential in the 1950s and 60s – but in terms of practical policy, discredited by early 1980s.
- European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) 1989 re-kindled interest – but this time in R-U "cooperation" – a spatial planning/governance concept – weak in terms of (economic) theory.
- New Economic Geography revisits and formalises agglomeration theory and rural spillover effects.
- Rise of "City Region" spatial planning – regional planners see cities as "the engines of growth".
- Rural development interest in short supply chains and "relocalisation".
- Increasing interest in "relational" approaches – networks – "organised proximity" – implications so far unclear.

The need for greater theoretical clarity:

- Regional development and spatial planning policy ideas have lost contact with economic theory.
- Technology and markets have changed, patterns of interaction have evolved – conventional theories need to be reviewed.

Methods

Literature review, formulation of a "conceptual model", taking account of:

- The diversity of actors and types of interaction involved;
- Conventional economic theories (agglomeration, spillovers etc);
- New ideas on "relational space" and "organised proximity";
- The recent policy discourse.

A Conceptual Framework

Specification:

- It is important to stress that this is a conceptual model, intended to describe and explain. It is not normative. The model should;
- Be sufficiently flexible/broad to accommodate a range of ways in which rural residents, businesses and institutions, interact with urban areas, other rural areas, and within their global context.
- Reflect recent and likely future technological and market changes in modes of interaction.
- Be logically consistent with current understanding of observed patterns of interaction and (insofar as they have been articulated) theoretical concepts.

3 Different Spaces...

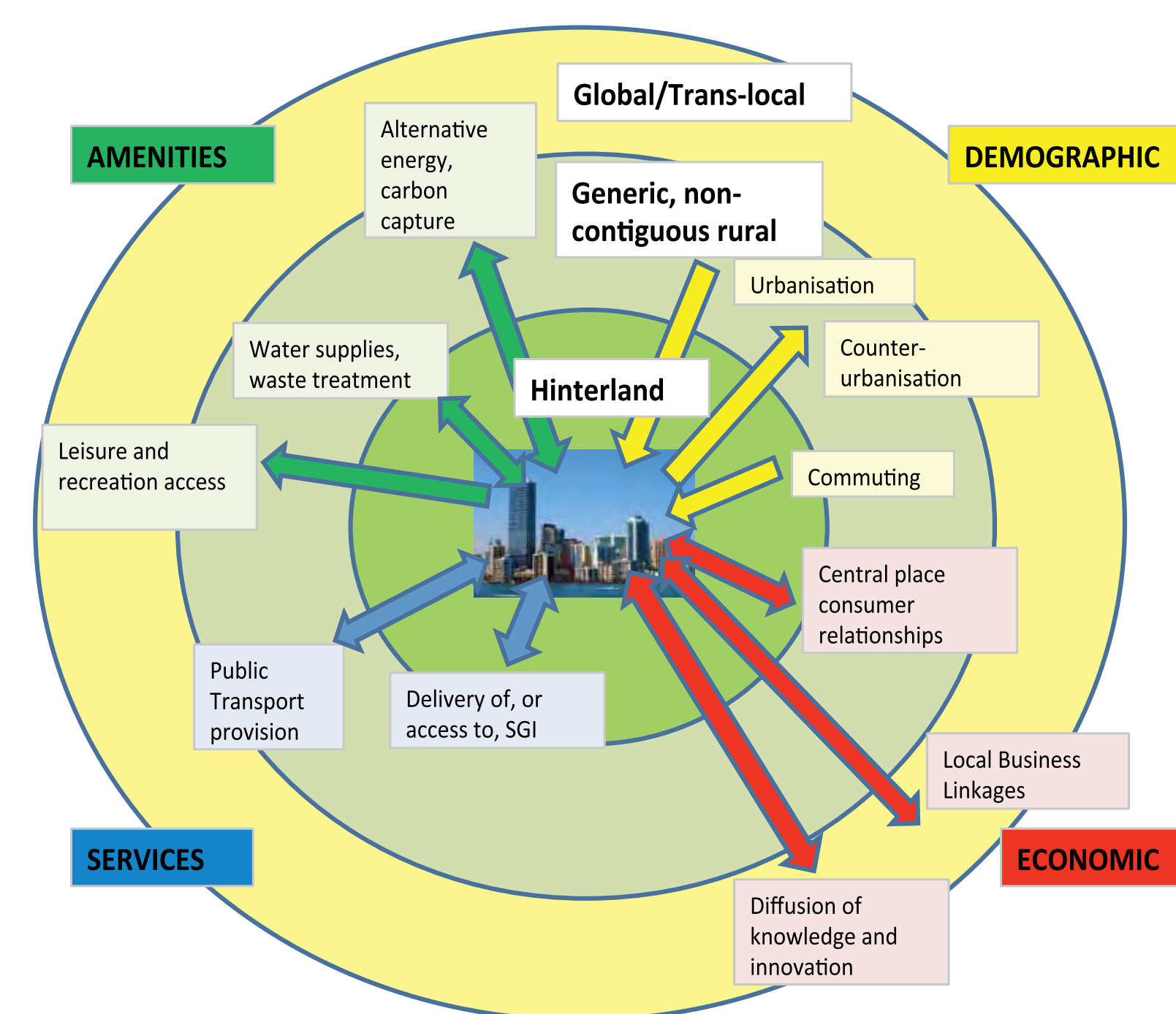
Interaction may take place:

- Between contiguous rural hinterlands and their "central place".
- Between generic (non-contiguous) urban and rural zones.
- In the form of "globalised trans-local linkages", based on "organised proximity".

A Typology of Interaction

- Demographic linkages
- Economic transactions and innovation activity
- Delivery of public services
- Exchanges in amenities and environmental goods

Figure 1: Schematic representation of Rural-Urban Interaction



...3 distinct policy approaches:

- Thematic U-R Cooperation
- Generic U-R Cooperation
- Fostering "Organised Proximity"

Sources: Copus, A.K. 2013. Urban rural relationships in the new century: clarifying and updating the intervention logic. In: Kolczynski, M. (ed.). *New Paradigm in Action; On Successful Partnerships*. Polish Ministry of Regional Development, Warsaw, Poland, 7-29.

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Type of Interac.on	Sub-type	Modes of intervention		
		(i) Thematic U-R Coop.	(ii) Generic U-R Coop	(iii) Fostering Organised Proximity
1. Demographic Linkages	(a) Urbanisation.	✓	✓	
	(b) Commuting and Counter-urbanisation.	✓		
2. Economic transactions and innovation activity	(a) 'Central place' consumer relationships.	✓	✓	?
	(b) U-R exchanges of goods and services.	?	✓	✓
	(c) U-R Diffusion of knowledge and innovation.		✓	✓
3. Delivery of public services	(a) Delivery of Services of General Interest (SGI).	✓	✓	?
	(b) Public transport.	✓		
4. Exchanges in amenities and environmental goods	(a) Leisure and recreation.		✓	?
	(b) Resources and waste disposal.	✓	✓	
	(c) Renewable energy.		✓	?

Conclusions

- Rural interaction is an increasingly complex phenomenon. "Within hinterland" linkages are only a part of the picture. Linkages between "generic" urban and rural spaces, and globalised "translocal" linkages, are increasingly important for many types of interaction.
- Our conceptual framework needs to reflect this complexity. The 4x3 grid (type of interaction x space) provides a meaningful structure within which to describe rural interactions, to assess change, and formulate policy responses.

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