

Urban-Rural Interactions: Finnish Experiences

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Changing Finnish Regional Policy

- Traditionally regional policy has been closely linked to aim of industrialisation
 - Promotion of underdeveloped regions has been prevailing target
 - Targeting to balanced development in the country
 - Economic activities spread evenly in the country
 - Priorities of regional policy
 - 1980s support of less developed and problematic regions
 - Beginning of 1990s increasingly promotion of stronger growth centres
 - Mid 1990s emphasis on promotion of stronger growth poles
- = Efficiency, regional differentiation, competitiveness, global markets new key words



Changing Finnish Regional Policy

- Regional differences continued to grow during 1990s
- Polarisation has been obvious in Finland
- BUT: Improving competitiveness of growth poles has not really been emphasised
- Rather emphasis has been laid on developing a large number of urban regions
- Attitude towards Helsinki region has been negative
- Only lately major cities and especially Helsinki region has got a policy programme of their own



Different Rural and Urban Regions

- Rural areas adjacent to cities
 - Growing regions, various interests to land use, residential areas, recreation
- Rural heartland areas
 - Strong agriculture and food processing
- Sparsely populated rural areas
 - Strong outmigration
 - Agriculture minor importance
- Urban areas
 - Different size and types of cities
- Small cities similar to rural areas



Introduction of Urban-Rural Interaction

- Working Group on Urban-Rural Interaction worked mainly in 2000s
- Tasks were:
 - to consider thematic fields of policies
 - to consider actions of policies
 - to consider governance arrangements of policies
- Result has been a growing awareness of urban-rural interaction
- We may argue that awareness has been stronger in rural policy
- Urban/regional policy has comprised urban-rural interaction as an “in-built impact”



Dimensions of urban-rural interaction

- Economic dimension
 - trade, tourism, commuting, networks between enterprises
- Social dimension
 - Social networks, networks between societies
- Political dimension
 - Governance, formation of regional partnerships, mutual regional policy strategies



Challenges Concerning Territorial and Social Cohesion

- Different modes and spatial scales of approaching the identity and behaviour
- Cohesion inside the regions defined between urban and rural spaces
- Urban-rural interaction usually not an explicit goal of national/ regional policies
- Often institutionalised divides
- Most regional programmes do not directly comprise urban-rural linkages
- Rather regional programmes may constrain interregional openness



Policy Response to Urban-Rural Interaction

- The Regional Cohesion and Competitiveness Programme (COCO)
 - Government's special programme for period 2010-2013
 - Merged of Regional Centre Programme, Regional Section for Rural Areas of the Special Rural Policy Programme and Island Development Programme
 - Each region consists of at least one strong urban centre
 - Promotes preconditions for independent development
 - Develops networking of economic and other activities in the region, between regions and internationally
 - Programme is a tool to support strategic development efforts
 - Aims to initiate important projects



Policy Challenges

- Extract best solutions to support urban-rural interaction
 - Structure basic conditions for openness
 - Create opportunities for urban-rural interaction
 - Direct brokerage of linkages
 - Generate rural capacities to interact
- Institutional obstacles
 - Between regional programmes
 - Between national level policies
 - Between EU policies



Thank you for your attention!



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