Inclusive rural development in times of urbanisation

Course for the Program Graduated Field of Development Sociology at the Polson Institute for Global Development at Cornell University, Prof dr ir Bettina B. Bock

Since 2009 the urban population has outnumbered the population living in the rural areas. The situation differs considerably between high and low income countries, with about 80% of the population residing in urban areas in the former compared to 30% in the latter. Yet the tendency is crystal clear – the world is urbanising rapidly. Urbanisation is generally perceived as a sign of modernisation and, in turn, development and economic growth. At the same time there is concern about its effect on rural areas and their residents and anxiety that urbanisation concurs with continuous rural decline, impoverishment and social exclusion of rural residents, and rural abandonment. More insight into the interrelation between urbanisation and rural development and the preconditions for realising inclusive rural development is, hence, of crucial importance.

This course looks into the impact of urbanisation on rural areas and the processes of social and spatial differentiation that go along with it. It focuses on the presence and the construction of peripheral places in times of mobilisation and globalisation that change the significance of geographical location. The course is built up around six core questions:

1. How does current trends of urbanisation affect rural areas and result in marginalisation?
2. What does marginalisation mean for rural residents and how does marginalisation interact with social exclusion?
3. How and why does gender, class and race matter and what does their specific effects tell us about rural development?
4. How has rural development been approached so far in academia and policymaking?
5. How can we explain the marginalisation of rural areas today in the light of globalisation and mobilisation?
6. What can be done to counteract marginalisation and promote inclusive rural development?

Course goals

The course will provide knowledge and comprehension of the features of rural differentiation in various parts of the world and their impact on the daily life of their residents. Students will learn how to examine rural change and how to use novel theoretical approaches for analysing processes of marginalisation. This will allow them to identify the main drivers and agents of marginalisation and their effects on residents’ sense of belonging and affective engagement. Integrating the different drivers and effects of marginalisation will enable them to examine varying approaches to rural development, to evaluate rural development policies and to design alternatives.

Learning activities

The course runs for six weeks and is organised along the six questions. It combines lectures with tutorials and six individual assignments. The lectures give an introduction into the topic of the week, whereas the tutorial are meant to discuss the assigned readings. Students are expected to prepare for the lectures through literature study (with guiding questions), and (occasionally) additional audio or video material (still to be confirmed). We will meet once a week for a lecture (2 hours) and a tutorial (1 hour). During the tutorial we will discuss the literature. The course schedule lists the required readings and some recommended extra readings. Both will be useful for the final (individual) assignment. Students will receive the assessment of the final assignment by email. During the course assistance with and feedback on draft versions of the assignment may be sought also during office hours (Friday afternoon).
Weekly programme

week 1: Friday March 22: 10.10-13.10 Urbanisation and its effect on rural areas

During this week students will get acquainted with the ongoing trend of urbanisation and its effects on rural areas (Question 1 How do current trends of urbanisation affect rural areas and result in marginalisation?). The lecture will give an overview of the significance of urbanisation in terms of demography and migration as well as life style. In addition, the lecture will provide insight in the relation between urbanisation and rural differentiation in terms of spatial and social segregation. The accompanying literature will introduce students to different approaches that seek to capture processes of rural differentiation, for instance in terms of counter urbanisation and transnational rural migration.

Required reading before the lecture:

Guiding questions for the tutorial:
1. What causes recent trends of rural in- and outmigration?
2. What did you learn about the social and spatial effects of rural in- and outmigration?
3. How do you evaluate these effects? Is there any need for policy interventions in your view?
   If yes, what then should be done? If not, why is there no need for policy interventions?
4. Is there need for more research? If yes, which questions do you have?

Recommended extra reading:
http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2015.05.003

week 2: March 29 10.10-13.10: Daily life in marginal rural areas

This week will focus on the daily life of those who live in the declining rural areas (Question 2 What does marginalisation mean for rural residents and how does marginalisation interact with social exclusion?). Students will understand how living in marginal rural areas affects daily life practices, among others through the loss of public and private services, and its impact on different social groups. In addition, we will look into the affective dimension of marginalisation in terms of residents’ feeling of social deprivation and sense of belonging. The accompanying literature introduces students to the concept of territorial cohesion and differences in the meaning of social services.

Required reading before the lecture:
Guiding questions for the tutorial:

1. What factors are producing the lack of services in rural areas?
2. For whom is this causing most problems in daily life?
3. Why is the lack of services also defined as a challenge for Europe as a whole?
4. Do you think territorial cohesion is important? Why is it (not) a problem in your opinion?

Recommended extra reading:


week 3: April 12, 10.10-13.10: Diversity and inequality in rural development

The previous week already introduced the concept of social exclusion at various levels of scale. This week we look more in depth into social exclusion and the inequalities that result from the structuring of (rural) society in terms of gender, class and race (Question 3: How and why does gender, class and race matter and what does their specific effects tell us about rural development?). We get insight into the social stratification of rural areas, its change in the course of rural change and the lesson we can learn from that understanding processes of rural development. The accompanying literature introduces the concept of social exclusion and gives examples for the relevance of gender, class and race to understand rural change.

Required reading before the lecture:


Guiding questions for the tutorial:

1. How does the discussed markers of social differentiation matter for social in- and exclusion?
2. Does the rural context play a specific role and if so, how and why?
3. What does the importance of gender, race and class tell us about processes of rural development?

Recommended extra reading:

Bock B.B. 2015. Gender mainstreaming and rural development policy: the trivialisation of rural gender issues. Gender, Place and Culture, 22(5):

week 4: April 19, 10.10-13.10 Remoteness, resource dependency and rural marginalisation:
The aim of this week is to understand the different ways in which social scientists have sought to explain processes of rural (under)development and how this has been taken up in policymaking. We will look into exogenous, endogenous and neo-endogenous theories which are all developed in interaction with EU policy frameworks. We will compare those with theories and programmes of rural development in the United States. The accompanying literature critically discusses approaches to rural development.

Required reading before the lecture:


Guiding questions for the tutorial:
1. What did you learn about different approaches to rural development?
2. Where does the idea of ‘smart rural development’ fit
3. What do you think is important to take into account when looking into rural development today? Support your opinion with arguments

Recommended extra reading:

week 5: April 26, 10.10-13.10: From fixed position at core or periphery to peripheralisation processes
This week concentrates on relational theories of relational processes of (under)development as they take account of the shifting importance of geography in times of mobilisation and globalisation (Question 4 How can we explain the marginalisation of rural areas in times of globalisation and mobilisation?). It introduces peripheralisation theory which is upcoming theoretical framework in Europe. It deserves particular attention as it examines the position of places within a broader societal context and network of relations while taking account of the ongoing dynamic of development. This allows us to study rural marginalisation as part of a process of urbanisation in which certain rural (and urban) areas are ‘left behind’ as peripheral and others are being included in modern, metropolitan life. The accompanying literature discusses the processes of peripheralisation in different context and among different social groups.

Required reading before the lecture:


Guiding questions for the tutorial:
1. How is peripheralisation defined in the two articles?
2. What causes peripheralisation?
3. Which dimension of peripheralisation is most important in your view for understanding processes of rural development? Support your opinion with arguments.

**Recommended extra reading:**

**week 6: May 4, 10.10-13.10**  
**Inclusive rural development**

The final week is meant to synthesise the knowledge and insight gained and to putting it to use in supporting inclusive rural development (*Question 6 What can be done to counteract marginalisation and promote inclusive rural development?*). We will look at this from two perspectives: the perspective of social innovation in which the development of new partnerships and civic engagement is centre stage. As well as the idea of promoting synergetic rural-urban relations. The accompanying literature gives examples from Europe and the US.

**Required reading before the lecture:**
https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12119


**Guiding questions for the tutorial:**

1. What did you learn about different approaches to inclusive rural development?
2. How do the two articles differ in how they discuss rural development?
3. What do you think is most important for policymakers to do in order to maintain the vitality of rural areas? Support your opinion with arguments.

**Recommended extra reading:**
https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2017.1361596

**Final individual assignment**

The final assignment is meant to synthesise the knowledge and insight gained and to putting it to use in the design of frameworks for inclusive rural development. This will be done in four steps, all of which will be documented and submitted to me as part of the assignment.

**Step 1: define a problem:** students will choose a particular problematic aspect of rural marginalisation as focal point; this may very well be a problem that is meaningful in the context of their own communities; they will describe the problem and explain why it is a relevant problem that deserves consideration in research, policy and/or practice;

**Step 2: design of a theory:** students will sketch a mind map that includes those features, factors and drivers of rural marginalisation that they consider pertinent for the problem to occur, based on what they learned in the previous weeks;

**Step 3: translation into action:** they will then draft either a programme for policy & practice that promotes inclusive development or outline a research project that provides insight into the requirements for such a programme for policy & practice;

**Step 4: summarize your insights in a blog-post of about 500 words for the department blog.**