

SOFT PLANNING FOR THE PLANNING OF THE “RURBAN” FUTURE OF EAST ASIA

Dr Terry McGee
Professor Emeritus
Department of Geography
University of British Columbia
Vancouver B.C.
Canada

“It is indeed futile and meaningless to attempt to create a sustainable city in isolation from the broader hinterland area”. Haughton (1999)

“Urbanization in China cannot copy the pattern of other countries and we must take a road to urbanization with Chinese characteristics according to the conditions of our country”. Premier Zhu Rongji (2005)

“Chinese President Xi Jin Ping has stressed ongoing efforts in building an “Ecological Civilization”. People’s Daily. August 29th (2017)

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION: DISCLAIMERS, DEFINITION, DIALOGUES

My thanks to the China Innovative Governance Urban-Rural Governance Network which extended the invitation to make a presentation at the International Symposium of CIURG to be held at Hong Kong University. At the time of the invitation I willingly responded since it is the subject of much of the research I have carried out over the last 30 years. The aims of the CIURG “...to provide a platform to connect peers and scholars who are interested in intellectual debates, exchange of ideas and research collaboration about local governance transformation in China are dedicated towards advancing both academic research and policy studies.” I responded to the organizers that I was not particularly qualified to comment on issues of local governance in China but that I had a long standing intellectual interest in issues of governance in urban hinterlands and as part of my research in the study of urbanization in the East Asian region particularly the sub-region of Southeast Asia. I must apologize to an audience that I suspect is largely interested in the issue of local governance change and policy in China. This is because I am ill-equipped to claim any expertise on China. This

not prevented me from referring to China in the paper. As a geographer my justification is not surprising for in my judgement China is incontestably part of the East Asia. Region. The country as you know has long had contacts with other parts of South East Asia and traders and migrants have travelled to and settled in many countries of the region. Most of my knowledge on China has been acquired by my interaction with my Chinese graduate students at UBC, academic contacts in China and friendship with Chinese emigrants in Southeast Asia. Any input that I can provide principally involves the limited understanding that I have of China in comparison with other countries in East Asia.

The “idea” of East Asia is an “intellectual construct” which groups together countries of East Asia that abut the Pacific Ocean stretching from China, Japan and the republic of South Korea, through mainland Southeast Asia consisting of Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia Thailand and Malaysia to Indonesia and the Philippines. (see McGee, 2013: pp.4-18) The unifying idea of East Asia first drew its stimulus from the role of the leading NICs in the early post-war (1945 war) period, Japan, the Republic of South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore that achieved rapid rates of economic growth characterized by rapid urbanization, the growth of industry and an increase in GDP. This was done within the geopolitics of the region in which China was seen by as an ongoing threat to the region as China emerged as one the largest socialist states in the global system. After 1980 the industrial growth increased for both domestic, and regional markets as well as internationally. At this time there with the growth of the global markets of an urban system in which as the economic structure of the urban system began to change to a domination of the services .The city states of Hong Kong and Singapore together with Shanghai, Tokyo, and Seoul, became important drivers of the growing market linkages within the region and their nation. This pattern was also true of the major Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand while Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and Myanmar were late joiners in these developments.

At this time there was an evolving urban system in which the economic structure of the East Asian began to change in which the city states of Hong Kong, Singapore together with larger Mega-Urban Regions (MURs) of Tokyo, Seoul, grew rapidly. For studies of the growth of mega-urban regions Gottman;s book on the Megapolis of the North Eastern Seaboard of the United States was an earlier influential study, Gottman J (1961). After 1995 China’s mega-urban regions such as Shanghai, Beijing, and other cities primarily located in the Eastern region began to grow in population and areal extent and the diversification of their economic base rapidly from the mid 1990s..There was also a rapid growth of population in the rural hinterlands of many major mega-urban cities which was the result of the diffusion of urban activities and migrant movement from the countryside. Professor Zhou’ work has been of great importance in researching the role of mega -urban regions in the urban system of China. See Zhou YX, (1991) Zhou Y.X and Ma

(2000 and Zhou Y.X and Yang Q (1993) Zhou and Ma L.J.C.(2000). Zhou (20 This growth of mega -urban regions also characterized many other East Asia Countries and other parts of the globe (See Angel,S et al.(2005) and Angel ,S (2011) for information on the global and regional impacts of this urban expansion) This lead to an increase of industrial and service activities both domestically and internationally in these rural areas which I have labeled “rurbanity” in which the former countryside experienced a rapid growth of non-agricultural employment and adapted to this by increasingly diversifying agriculture in the hinterlands of the major mega-urban regions By 2019 the most striking contrast between China and the rest of East Asia was the fact that in terms of the urban system is that it had by far the largest number of mega-urban regions not only in East Asia but also the globe. By 2018 China dominated the region with a population of 1.4 billion, and rapid urbanization and a growing presence in the market systems of the region. At this time the combined population of the combined population of the rest of the East Asia region was estimated to be approaching 750 million. The other contrast China and Vietnam political economy of China and Vietnam that were implementing plans to permit the private sector to play a bigger role in the respective economies by creating mixed economic systems. This involved opening -up economic space that included and international transfers of capital and technology. But even today the economy is not exhibiting the features of a full market economy as state enterprises still continue to exist and the state still retains control of the pace at which this transition can occur.

By contrast for the rest of East Asia is characterized by a variegated mixture of market economies in which the state still plays a major role. (see Mc Gee George C.S Lin, A., Marton, Mark Y.L Wang and Jiaping Wu (2007a). In this publication jointly written by the authors we laid out the proposition that urban and rural policies in China are dominated by the state which in the context of this paper is “ ..best seen “as being filtered through a series of administrative scales from national to local level” (Mc Gee et al., *ibid.*(2007 a): p10).We agreed with Ma (2005) that these policies are best seen as .a project of state formation” that involves negotiation, resistance and compromise by all scales of government, quasi -government agencies and non-government institutions such as firms and foreign companies that is developed by various developmental, political and social goals. The process of activating these policies involves the state defining urban and rural space, regulating urban and rural space in an attempt to conformity to governmental representation of rural and urban space.” (op. cit. Mc Gee et al., 2007: p10).

In today’s presentation echoing the 2007 book I have argued that since the 1980s this urban - rural divisions have become increasingly porous as transactions between rural- urban spaces increase through rural-urban migration and the movement of goods, capital, information and people between these sectors is producing a new transactional environment within the urban system which offers both positive and negative challenges to the process of rural urban ttransition

I was struck by the fact that the symposia focuses on the idea of building a network of scholars who are carrying out research that emphasizes the linkage between research and policy in which I

have been involved since the 1960's in particular on research sponsored by the International Research Centre of Canada an agency set-up by the Canadian national government that sought to build South to South networks of younger academics to increase understanding of "development" policy issues such as the role of street vendors who were presenting challenges to the governments of the East Asian region from the perspective of urban governments. At that time Professor Yue Man Yeung who later joined the Department of Geography at the Chinese University of Hong Kong was organizing a project on the policy challenges posed by street hawkers in the cities of Southeast Asia that involved setting-up a network of participants from Universities from Jakarta and Bandung in Indonesia, Georgetown and Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, Bangkok and Chiang Mai in Thailand and Manila and Baguio in the Philippines and. He very kindly invited me to join the project as he was aware of my research on street vendors in Hong Kong conducted while I was in the Department of Geography at the University of Hong Kong (see Mc Gee 1967) See also Macloud ,S and Mc Gee T (1990) for a discussion of the changing structure of the Food Industry in Hong Kong. The participants from all participating Southeast Asian countries met initially to thrash how this theme could be studied in the context of comparative studies. A research programme was developed that involved the comparative study of the hawkers in Southeast Asian and the cities that were chosen to be the sites of the research. This was an important learning stage of the research process for, not surprisingly, it emerged that there were important differences in the retailing practice of street vendors in the diverse cities that reflected both different governments policies, and the culture of selling on the streets reflected in the location of hawker retailing and practices such as bargaining at the time of purchase, the demographic and social features of hawkers, such as gender and their positional choice of selling sites that were often located close to areas of formal retailing from shops which from the point view government management of cities was causing congestion and hindering services such as fire-fighting and medical services. The city governments responded with policies of relocation which were often located in undesirable sites from the point of view of the hawkers. Overnight street vendors would reclaim their sites from which they had been relocated.

These policies varied greatly between the cities and this indicated the need to collect information on the context in which street hawkers carried out their activities and the mixture of policies that were adopted by cities before the commonalities between the hawkers and sites that we were investigating, could be determined. This led to discussion on the strategic goals of the research. For instance, could policies adopted in Manila where the government followed policies of imprisoning street vendors be applied in Jakarta where the number of street hawkers regarded as illegal far exceeded the capacity of existing prisons? (See Yeung Y.M and Mc Gee .T.G. (1977) This challenge is no less important in countries in large countries of East Asia such as China Indonesia and Vietnam where the context of urbanization varied between different parts of the country. It is interesting that both these countries have successfully introduced policies directed to

establishing the use of a national language for their country which has certainly facilitated communication at a national level This is a case of the application of “soft planning” by which I refer to national policies that are introduced by the state to strengthen human capital, health, education etc., including support both of research and learning to the challenges and learning about both cross disciplinary and comparative research as a way of understanding specific countries policies. I take up the issue of soft policy in the final section of the paper .So for the purposes of the this presentation I have focused on the research challenges of collecting information that can be directed to the development of appropriate policy in which comparative research provides an important input to research on the relationship between governance and urbanization and policy development although I would insist that the comparative research framework offers an important entry point to this theme. For an example, comparative research comparing the production of urban space in China and Vietnam under market socialism see (Mc Gee 2009a) and Mc Gee (2009b) for using comparative analysis as a significant way to increase the understanding of the urban and rural change.

So for the purposes of this presentation I have focused on the research challenge of collecting information that can be directed to the development of appropriate policy in which comparative research plays an important input to research on the relationship between governance and urbanization in the development process. Over the years since I first joined the Department of Geography in the University of Malaya in 1959 I have been engaged in “learning” Southeast Asia. This was not always “book learning” or borrowing ideas from the developed countries which in my judgement often led to unhelpful conclusions, my knowledge came largely as a result of field studies conducted in urban and rural sites in Malaysia, Indonesia. Thailand, the Philippines which involved field research both in urban and rural areas that reinforced the “intuitive sensing” of the differences between rural and urban but at the same time reminded me that rural and urban sites were connected through kinship networks, population movement, trading networks, information flows and their positioning within a governance administrative framework which delivered policies that as well as the need to develop new methods of data collection about these development programmes were designed to improve the quality of life in both rural and urban societies. But these plans were differently applied in urban and rural areas and administered at different government scales. There was very little attention applied in these plans to develop links between rural and urban areas which had the greatest potential for improving the everyday life of the inhabitants of both rural and urban areas. While these plans involved considerable investment of “hard capital” e.g. the infrastructure of roads and rail , in last thirty years digital networks have grown-up which certainly facilitate the communication and information flows between rural and urban areas and indirectly have had “spin-off” benefits mostly to urban areas that were already were growing rapidly as the results of national budgetary flows to the cities of region and

international investment. Despite the fact that many East Asian governments put in place rural development policies that aimed at increasing income and services the economic inequality between rural and urban areas increased which generated out migration from rural areas to urban areas but also more recently important channels for seeking non -rural income in rural areas as migrants returned from the urban areas of coastal East Asia. The spatial expansions of urban activities such as industry, off farm employment in agriculture or public works and increased remittances from migrants in cities to their home households so that the urban households invested in education which both in Indonesia and Malaysia was universally provided in rural and urban areas until the end of secondary school education.

However, this process did not occur without challenges within rural areas which arose out of conflicts over land, water and other resources that were an important part of the flows from urban to rural which fall under the national policies related to environmental sustainability, solving challenges of income inequality between rural and urban areas and developing new systems of governance for rural areas. (Mc Gee 2008) This was accelerated by the a urban diffusion of urban activities into the hinterlands of urban areas, Surprisingly the concept of the interfacing between urban and rural activities was not central to the policies of East Asian countries at this time which were focused on managing not only rapid urban growth but also creating a meaningful and effective structure of governance that will link the “rural areas” to urban areas and in particular reduce poverty in rural areas. within innovative institutional structures is at the heart of developing sustainable societies in both rural and urban areas of East Asia. (see Allouche, Middleton and Grewal, (2014;) Bray, 2013; Chen, Wen and Li Z (2017), Kelly, P.(2000); Marcotullio and Lee, (2003).Peller and Mustapha 2010). Mc Gee (2008), Mc Gee T.G (2012a). (2012b) Nakai N. (1998)).Quian , H and Wang C. (2012)

The concept of “interfacing” refers to the contact process between rural and urban populations that involves the diffusion of urban activities into their rural hinterlands and rural migrants movements into urban areas There are of course many examples of the process but it can be argued the nexus between land - water-energy-food which are the are basic requirements for most rural households particularly in the deltaic hinterlands of many of the East Asia countries are most important. While the early stages of this diffusion of urban activities were characterized by many challenges that created tension between in both rural and urban areas particularly over land in agricultural production and the creation of large urban agglomerations that have become Extended Metropolitan Urban regions. As an example the decision to establish an “industrial estates” in these mixed hinterlands of urban and rural activities creates challenges to the everyday life of rural households by restricting their access to water (irrigation) land (e.g. replacing rice land by industrial activity), energy and food particularly for staple crops such as rice. This means that the ecological system that is the basis of the livelihoods of rural households that has been developed

over many thousands of years is disrupted forcing outmigration from the households to be employed in urban activities both in rural areas and urban areas that effects the labor availability for producing food crops an increase in fallow land that effects rural incomes as well the use of food grown domestically. Thus development plans grew out of the a “frozen territorial governance system” dominated by the national states that provided most of this investment which was positioned within an outmoded system of national accounting of which budgetary transfers to the larger urban areas made it difficult to introduce new policy initiatives to alleviate these tensions in the hinterlands of the major urban. Areas. But since 2080 East Asian states have expanded their efforts to develop policies which involve some decentralization of power to the local level, changes to urban and rural planning policies that indicate attempts to alleviate the environmental effects of this process in building and planning. Chen Y, Wen, Y and Li Z. (2017) present a case study of this change in their analysis of the transformation of the planning paradigm adopted for one of the seven districts of Shantou City, Chaonan in Guangdong which is characterized by production activities that are village based rather than local governments. In these villages most economic and public activities are organized by social organizations rather than local governments in which rural and urban boundaries have become blurred. The application of the various Master plans since 2003 have failed to resolve many of the social, environmental, infrastructural, challenges of the plan it is suggested because of the shortage of funding. In the conclusion to the paper they argue that the “... complicated dynamics of desakota development in a rapidly developing context are ”..marked by the dual track dynamics of formal and informal top down and bottom-up and urban and rural change” (op. cit. p454)...” in which the Chaonan’s growth regime is no longer sustainable”(ibid. p464) It is suggest some aspects of the Master Plans should be modified. to stress the greater need for “bottom-up development. Examples are suggested that would involve changes to the 1913 Plan such as revisions to implementation of the action planning paradigm,, greater incorporation of stakeholders such as government, enterprises,(informal economic organizations and formal enterprises) and the public (community/village organizations) and finally the implementation of these plans should include“ local modalities” of economic organization. social structure, cultural characteristics and spatial dynamics” (paraphrased from Yi Chen, Yuan Wen and Zhigang Li (2016 p464) This conclusion has important implications for the discussion of the types of “alternative development” which are engaged in latter part of the paper.

Finally this discussion needs to be positioned within the macro framework of the demographic, social and economic effects of the urbanization process over the next 30 years. Thus while the urbanization transition is occurring at different rates throughout East Asia projections suggests that most East Asian countries will reach levels of more than 60 percent of their population resident in urban areas within 30 years. This change is reflected in four areas of societal change.

- (1) A slowing growth of population of rural areas and a rapid movement of rural populations to urban areas, regionally nationally and internationally and the birth rate in rural areas declines through time leading to a reduction in family size in rural areas. The return of urban female migrants in the countryside who join their rural families may also lead to an increase in the birth rate that may go some way to reducing the decline of population.
- (2) There are reasons for believing that the figures of total urban population are under -estimated because the data collection systems of many of these countries in East Asia do not include people engaged in urban activities in rural areas and in their definitions of urban populations. In China they often consist of rural migrants who are employed in what are described as non-rural activities
- (3) The growth of urban populations in rural areas is being accelerated by the process of spatial extension of urban activities in rural areas in a process of “Urban diffusion”. But these dynamic and rapidly changing areas of extended urban and rural space is being disrupted by the growth of residential areas, industrial estates and expanding secondary towns (new and old) that have attracted commercial investment. Thus in rural areas the separation between urban and rural are being eroded and new relationships are being created through enlarged employment networks, increased flows of goods and commodities, capital and people throughout these rural areas and within urban areas that reflects the features of extended urban regional formation at the sub-national level and local level. Clearly over the period since 1945 there is still much diversity in these trends throughout the East Asian region that have implications for policy responses to the mixture of rural and urban activities within these areas.
- (4) This poses policy challenges to existing institutional systems that have been developed to manage rural and urban areas separately. The former binary categories of rural and urban that have developed the East Asian region who have the classificatory authority of these two regions in many cases have been established for long periods. This is true in administrative units at whatever scale, national, provincial, district or local where this rural-urban division guided the national states development policies .This is particularly important when it is concerned with government decisions on budget allocations, taxation policy and planning policy that adopt development policies that are directed towards encouraging economic growth. The general assumption underlying policy is that the growth of cities as part of urbanization increases national income because of agglomeration, economies of scale and the growing labor force familiar with the

emerging technologies many of them digital will lower costs of production and increase the competitive capacity of urban areas in internal and international markets. Thus the majority of East Asian nations have followed policies that encourage urbanization by investments both from national and international sources in transportation infrastructure, road, rail and air and digital networks both within urban areas and the extended peri-urban space that speed -up the transactional environments often reducing transactional costs. (see Mc Gee, T.G (2007b) in Watters and Mc Gee eds. *New Geographies of the Pacific Rim- Asia Pacific*” C. Hurst & Co, London pp29-400

(5) Of particular relevance to any discussion about policy is the difference between “institutional frameworks created by the various states for the purpose of managing the state which creates various territorial scales of government and governance that differentiate the various scales at which management policies are to be implemented. Broadly one may suggest that there are two dimensions to this administrative structure. A vertical dimension which defines the administrative responsibilities at the different levels of state institutions which use administrative definition of these areas for the spatial delineation of the territory for each of the administrative scales. A horizontal dimension that allocates some responsibilities to the various administrative scales. Historically thus administrative structure has been divided between rural and urban areas which is another manner by which the rural and urban areas have often become a major defining feature of the “development” in what are both developing and developed economies. As such the persistence of this societal division has been central to the understanding of the political economy of the nations of East Asia.

(6) As Fokdal and Herrle (2019) point out “... a multi-scaler understanding of the state can provide a realistic picture of the dynamics and interactions between state and non-state agencies and actors” which may be described as a “mode of development which while interpreted as an authoritarian top-down system by many commenters operates at various administrative scales from national to the local level. In fact it exhibits more flexibility, space for negotiation and even at times tolerating opposition to the aspects of these policies which creates flexible space.” P87 This particularly so in hinterland regions of the mega-urban regions of East Asia.in China and Vietnam that makes them distinctive within the East Asian region. (Mc Gee,et.al 2009b).Folkdal and Herrie further argue that more flexibility needs to be developed in the negotiations “...within and between state and non -state actors(individual and collective) within and beyond the state to

make use of informal mechanisms and resources to plan and to drive growth in these hybrid regimes ...” (ibid, p96).

(7) On one hand the experience of socialism in these countries encourages a form of development that emphasizes efforts to decrease urban and rural difference through policies of improved transportation, education, health, social welfare, service delivery and investment in agricultural that to improve agricultural productivity and quality of life in rural areas. This provides the priorities that are developed to invest in urban areas as opposed to “rural development” for disadvantaged rural areas. The result is that national development indices for different regional areas of China and Vietnam reflects the fact China’s urban policy has accelerated the growth of the larger urban regions since the 1980s. This has led to a growing marketisation that has seen an increase in the contribution to the GNP. and increase in urbanization levels throughout the country. While these developments suggests that at the national level this model of development seems to offer little alternative but to encourage structural shifts to the industrial and service sector located in the largest extended urban regions of East China and increase China’s national economic growth internationally which is supported by developing a programme such as the Belt and Road Initiative which provide greater access to resources and international trading opportunities in the regions of Europe, Africa, Latin America, and East Asia and Southeast Asia by investing in the hard infrastructure of ports, transportation, urban development which will accelerate China’s entry into the global markets it raises the an important question for policy makers in an era in which the globalization system is being eroded.. This is seem an urgent need to create as development and modernization. As Premier Zhu Rongji has said “we must take a road to urbanization according to the condition of our country”

PART TWO

RETHINKING URBAN AND RURAL THEORY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

In order to enhance the understanding of these processes that are part of the acquisition of knowledge that has been clustered around many discourses that have characterized debates over understandings of urban and rural theory that reflect the way in which information has been acquired and utilized it is necessary to insert a brief discussion of urbanization theory largely developed by theories and discourses developed that have influenced urbanization policy (See Mc 1991b, and(1992).Broadly I have argued these policies reflect how knowledge that can be applied

to policy. Broadly I divide them into two clusters. “Grounded Knowledge “ and Above Ground Knowledge which attempts to capture ideological underpinnings of each of the clusters around the debates that have emerged in the two dialogical clusters, Since the central argument of this paper revolves around the policies that are being deployed to manage social, economic and political changes within the hinterland areas of where the growth of urban activities is most advanced.

I suggest that this division can be best understood by dividing the knowledge that has been acquired by societies concerning urbanization into two clusters outlined below that are justified by the supportive ideologies of “ “alternative development” and “developmentalism” that characterize the both the policy and intellectual debates.

(1) **“GROUNDED KNOWLEDGE”** that essentially argues that knowledge acquired by rural and urban dwellers should be seen as an making an important contribution to the both to rural and urban linkages, sustainability the quality of life and efforts to reduce the disparity in income between rural and urban households. This knowledge cluster emphasizes the capacity of rural-based populations to exercise agency in the context and specificity of local activities often labeled “everyday life” Here we are most concerned with the cluster of knowledges being employed in the interfacing process that is occurring in these areas of extended urban space. This deploys knowledge acquired largely at the local level many centuries. It focuses the way this knowledge can be deployed at the “grassroots level” to adapt to the spread of urban activities into the hinterlands of expanding urbanization and resolving the challenges that emerge. This Grounded Knowledge” discourse puts more emphasis on the interaction between rural and urban forces in situ conditions of both rural and urban areas as opposed to “above ground knowledge” which assumes that the rural populations are weaker participants in this interaction because they are regarded as a “passive, traditional and resistant to the forces of change from outside” It should be stressed that these challenges occur in a broader spatial context of accelerating transactional networks that facilitate and accelerate the pace of change in both rural and urban areas. But at same time this is interaction occurs in environment that is full of uncertainty because of the “rapid and uneven change in the complexity and condition of both “rural” and “urban areas”. This situation presents real challenges to policies adopted by governments, state companies and the market sector which are often using outmoded spatial unit’s data as a basis for policy formation.

(2) **ABOVE GROUND KNOWLEDGE”** that applies use of the historical experience of the “Global North” that emphasizes the role of urban areas as catalysts of economic growth and makes economic assumptions that urbanization is the main institutional driver of increasing levels

of national wealth. The agglomerative benefits created by urban density, economies of scale that optimize productivity and specialization of labor buttress this argument. It is therefore assumed to be a prerequisite for “national development” and become one of the major goals of the “developmentalist goals that adopt a “developmentalist goals”. It would be foolhardy to suggest that this brief summary captures the whole range of the discourses that have developed in urban and rural studies but it must be stressed that the” ideological arguments” that have been developed are very powerful and dominate debates about the urbanization process. This summary is very brief and does involve some further comparative discussion of the two clusters.

With respect to Grounded Knowledge the ideas that are presented provoke developing alternative development theories that adopt a very different approach to development. John Friedmann in his book “Empowerment. The Politics of Alternative Development (1992) argues that mainstream development policies do not ensure a better life, particularly for the marginalized populations of rural and urban who live in “disempowered” social, political and psychological condition. Alternative development seeks to restore the initiative to the disempowered sectors and suggests the household as a strategic point of departure which he argues has the economic, political and social potential to become integrated into wider social relations of production and politics which help the them recover their own “life spaces” in process of empowerment. This leads me to into a discussion of the next section in which I try to suggest some ways in which can operationalize this process of empowerment that argues following Friedman “that alternative development needs to look at economic relationships in a very different ways from main-stream doctrine.” Friedmann op cit (1992) p.vii .and Friedmann.(2011) If we want progress towards alternative development in which the ideas of economic development and societal development have to be rethought from the ground up offers challenging options.

John Friedmann draws heavily on ideas that have emerged in Latin America where he had extensive experience and in which in much of the argument is centered on a the rise of a civil society that emphasizes the emancipation of civil society which “...strictly speaking....should be used in a plural form which is structured by class, caste, religion , language, regional identity, culture, race and gender” (ibid p vii). The main goals of alternative development are to empower, the poor, the marginalized in their nations to asset their basic human rights to take part in a movement to reclaim their human rights as citizens and increased participation in the political processes of the nation of which they are part. These goals have been embraced globally by international agencies such as the United Nations and NGO’s that include increased autonomy in decision-making of territorially organized communities, local self -reliance (but not autarchy), direct (participatory) democracy and experiential social learning which start by being mobilized in “... the locality which is the level at which local issues can be most easily mobilized around

local issues” (op. cit. viii). This occurs at the local level of both rural and urban areas. Friedmann (1992, Chapter Two: pp.1-13)

Considering the implications of Friedman’s “ideology” of alternative development this suggests that if the rethinking the economic foundations of an alternative development were to gain traction in the “whole” economy, it would present a model that articulates market and non-market relations in the production of life and livelihood through a household economy that would involve significant changes to government policies and institutions of governance that implemented them nationally. For example, this could involve a revision of the system of national economic accounts and administrative units are widely used as a basis for national accounting and data collection used to inform public policies.

The recent award of the Nobel prize (2019) to three economists has focused attention on the fact that in the mid-1990s the issue of using weak data to develop macro-theory began a shift from macro theory to micro theory which was reinforced by the growth of “post modernism theory” that is skeptical of the use of macro-data and “grand theory”. The Nobel prize winners’ solution to this challenge was to design research projects that looked at micro data which they regarded as an important part of development theory such as the close relationship between level of education and income as an indicator of economic development. They developed types of analysis in which for example in which “experimental field studies” modeled on “scientific experimental methods” were carried out in an attempt to achieve a more fine -grained assessment to that that could be offered by macro theory. Of course the most perplexing challenge of this approach is the how the information gained in this approach can be incorporated into macro theory particularly for public policy Here we are dealing with issued of government and governance in which national governments formulate policies and governance means that they implement their “development” policies at the various scales ranging, for example, from nation, province, metropolitan regions, cities and local administrative units such as districts or local settlements in which various administrative levels have some responsibility for implementing these policies. From the governance point of view there is considerable potential for nationally formulated policies particularly if there has been consultation between the national and other levels of government especially in these rural hinterlands of the mega-urban regions of East Asia which are experiencing rapid societal and economic change national governments face opposition at the local level in part because of the different levels of governance that are in operation in the management of these policies. They are also complicated by the role of the urban -based drivers of the extension of urban activities in which state corporations, the building industry, the private sector are active. These have often become zones of confrontation with the “rural villages” and various levels of government above the “local’.

Another thread of the dialogue in this paper is that policy development that utilizes “grounded knowledge” collected at the local level must become “operational” for the creation of innovative policies that can speed up societal change as part of the rethinking of the “developmentalists.” who utilise economic measures of development and national accounts where measures such as the gross domestic product(GDP) or gross national product (GNP) are often assumed to be indices of development. The major point here is that this data is generally presented at a national level and larger administrative units such Metropolitan Extended Areas that are often defined as urban but in fact have many smaller administrative units dominated by “rurban” activities. However, this information rarely informs us how income is distributed spatially at the grounded level of the local. Also it does not engage to any great extent the issue of income distribution in societies. So if my arguments that the emerging “rurbanity” in the hinterlands of the larger cities of East Asia region represent a form of societal transition to alternative development trajectories has validity then it is in these spaces that new forms of societal change will emerge that need alternative indicators that are drawn from the ideas of “alternative development. This is well illustrated by the what has been occurring the rural areas of the urbanizing belt of East Japan that stretches south Tokyo to Osaka that becoming increasingly “urban” due to the assimilation of endogenous forces that has been fueled by the extension of urban activities particularly the “putting out of parts of the production process to these “rurban “areas” and the growth of digital platforms for commercial activity.

Over the years in which I have engaged this issue of “rurbanity” I have had some difficulty in giving a name to this process. In part because this interaction which is producing a form of urban-rural relationship that is creating a new type of synergetic relationship which researchers have attempted to capture by the use of concepts such as peri-urban, urban hinterlands, extended urban space, diffuse urbanization etc. In my work on these spaces in the 1980s I used the term “desakota” combining two words from the Indonesian language *desa* (village) and *kota* (city) to try and capture the conceptual essence of this process which identified the central component of the processes as the urban diffusion of urban activities which was one the main cause of economic change in the urban hinterlands.(See Mc Gee, 1991a: p25). But for some researchers the sub-text of this argument was to suggest that the “urban impact” was the dominant factor driving change in these rural areas in which rural populations would be urbanized losing their rural life as they became more urban in which the a collapsing urban rural divide is articulated through an explosion of developmental patterns and potential within a thickening, if unevenly woven fabric of world-wide urbanization” (Cairns, Stephen (2018) citing Brenner (2013: p209) .This urban expansion exhibits spatially uneven and asymmetric patterns on the landscapes in these regions of extended space urban and rural space resulting in the partial absorption of urban activities but also a persistence of rural activities was unevenly positioned within the landscape of these hinterlands. (see Shepphard E.(2019) who engages the issue of the asymmetry and inequality of the flows that are

generated in this process as being shaped by the distribution and quality of infrastructures, the activities that take part in these spaces, the layout of the natural landscape and the geographies of accessibility. (Cited by Dunford, 2018: p4), The same process occurred in the hinterlands of city states such as Hong Kong in the area on the New Territories where the production of food provided an important source of the food consumption for Hong Kong's urban population in the 1960s. Food production in Hong Kong declined considerably in the decade of the 1960s sixties as food tastes changed and the food were sourced world-wide. (see Macloud and Mc Gee, 1990). In parts of the New Territories this was principally because of the out migration to the United Kingdom where they were employed as kitchen staff of many Chinese restaurants that were proliferating in urban centres such as London at this time. Their regular remittances supplemented the declining household income that was associated with the decreasing food production. This evidence was provided by field studies conducted at household level in the Sup Say Heung area of Hong Kong carried out by the Hong Kong University, Department of Geography in the early 1960s.

PART THREE

OPERATIONALIZING THE STUDY OF “RURBANITY” TO CREATE INNOVATIVE ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES FOR EMERGING RURBAN SPACES IN THE “URBAN HINTERLANDS” OF EAST ASIA: FRAMING RURBANITY

In the Introduction I have tried to suggest how my experience in East Asia has affected my way of thinking about the process of development of urbanization and the varying trajectories that the urbanization process is experiencing in that part of the world. In this presentation I want to focus on the processes of societal change in the rapidly changing rural hinterlands of larger cities of the region that are occurring as a result of the interfacing of rural and urban activities into these areas. Even though many of these hinterlands are defined as urban by governments as they are administratively reclassifying them as urban there still remains ongoing rural activities which are made “invisible” in a statistical sense by this new designation. There is much debate about the pace and features of this interaction that results from the diffusion of these activities ranging from concern that it is creating challenges to the environment, rural systems of production and the new melding of the rural and urban that from the point of view of many governments in the East Asia regions offers many challenges to the sustainability of the societal and ecological systems of these areas. The expansion of urban activities into these hinterlands has resulted in a mixture of new urban activities and remaining rural activities .Webster, D, Cai,J .Muller, L and Luo,B (2003) have identified the drivers of this urban expansion into three main groups (1) Governmental or Quasi-Governmental Drivers (2) national state and national forces interacting with global forces and sub-

national and regional partners to advance development goals (3) Regional (e.g. Provincial. At this level government authorities are working with different levels of administrative authority in the implementation of national development goals. (4) Entrepreneurial drivers that include bureaucratic entrepreneurs, private sector employees and in the informal sector as well individual household and small-scale entrepreneurs. Obviously a classification that was formulated from the China context would need to be adapted if it were applied in the wider East Asia context where a different mix of drivers would characterize individual countries. I have tried to illustrate how this might affect the transition from the planned economy to market socialism in the case of Vietnam and China (see Mc Gee, 2009 Shen, X and Tsai, K.S (2010) There has been much debate about the features of this interaction that results from the diffusion of urban activities and the challenges that it poses to the environment, rural systems of production and the new melding of the rural and urban that offer challenges to the development and sustainability of the hinterlands of the extended metropolitan regions.

Initially in my field work in the 1960s in Malaya I took a position that saw the main research challenge as being primarily one in which urban and rural activities were interacting in a way that was dysfunctional in which the drivers of urban diffusion, government policy, the state corporations and the private sector were implanting urban activities that were creating a landscape in which rural and urban activities were largely spatially separated which I called “desakota” from the Indonesian words for village and town. Critiques of this concept drew attention to the fact these landscapes were populated by people who were engaged in an “interfacing process” between the rural and the urban in which the institutions that drove urban diffusion were the most powerful forces in the process. This was reinforced by the portrayal ‘...of the rural as a mere backdrop for the more spectacular processes of urbanization which from this perspective that rural hinterlands are reduced to ‘nothing more than the towns ‘environment’, its horizon, its limit, to use Le Fefevbre ((1970) cited by Cairns (2011):p11). See also Desakota Study Team (2008)

I would argue that many rural people involved in this process were absorbing and changing this impact of urban expansion and creating a “rurban” condition in which they exercise agency by strategies of accommodation, adaptation and contestation that enabled them to increase their household incomes through, for example, wage employment in industrial estates, negotiating over land transfers and using the increased income for access to urban markets in which they make use of the transport infrastructure that had been largely taken the form of “hard” capital investment and in the Chinese context increasingly accommodate to these processes by establishing cooperative enterprises that increase available capital that enables the organization of agricultural production and product distribution that include elements of private market management. It would be foolhardy to suggest that this process is smooth and unilinear as urbanization increases. This spatial extension of urban activities is uneven at that “grassroots level” of rural “everyday life” and highly variegated throughout the nations of East Asia. It is also helped in many parts of

the region by macro -policies of education and public health services and the use of a national language for all their citizens.

Researching about the processes of “rurbanity” that can inform public policy in these hinterland areas needs some radical rethinking about the way data is collected. The assumptions that underline formation of policies for “rurban regions” in the context of rapid changing social, economic and political trends are constrained and need to develop a new methodologies that widen the data base they need to collect and assemble information. It can then be deployed to inform both the capacity of local level societal formations as well as utilizing “agency of local populations) in the processes of interfacing that are occurring at the ground level. Just as important is to recognize how that this condition of “rurbanity” can be communicated too policy makers as an important component of their development policies. A major task is to create priorities within the various levels of government implementation in which case studies can be carried out to provide this information. We need to explore how we can use this information so as to convince policy makers to recognize how the contribution to alternative development strategies can be incorporated into policy Policies such as decentralization of budgets and increased local control often present more challenges in the societal context of rural areas as for instance when new land policies are introduced. It is important that these new data collection methods that present evidence of the need to change existing policies that still rely on outmoded ideas of rural and urban spatial separation and reinforces the importance of these “rurban” areas play in providing services, resources, food, water, energy, and labor to the city cores of these EMRs. These studies while using grounded case study information must be set within the contextual models of the process which is creating these rurban areas (See Cairns, et.al.(2015).

There are many theoretical models that can be used to help develop policy priorities of which I would cite two. For example, Marton (2000: p46) presents a diagram of the relationship between the processes of diversification and commercialization of the rural economy which operates within administrative and institutional parameters of location and production of industrial enterprises which he labels industrial spaces which draws much of it information from fieldwork conducted in Kunshan in China between 1980 and 2000 This study focuses on the manner in which rural communities often with local government assistance constructed industrial space. A fuller version is presented in Part Three. and Four. This study shows how the local communities developed these industrial enterprises which came to be known as TVE’s (Township and Village Enterprises) It is important to understand how this process involved collaboration between town and village governments in their local area as they established TVE’s. in establishing industrial enterprises. This was very much local development and it is estimated that 80 per cent of them were established with funds and other capital investments that were from within Kunshan County. Their development led to an increase in non-agricultural income and household income and became a

successful case study of alternative development which calls for “positional. conjunctural analysis” which not just depend on place-specific characteristics but also socio-spatial positionality and connectivity. The result is the operation of these place-specific characteristics of as a result just not of culture but of the multiplicity of within place activities and between place activity spaces that are conceptual categories (see Sheppard, 2019).

Another approach is offered in a paper by Dunford (2018: p4) who has developed a diagram of “activity spaces elaborated from Martin and March (1972) and Echenique (1994) which I have utilised to capture the “activity spaces of the emerging rurban areas in which spatial structures involve the analysis of “activity spaces in which people live and work, the communications infrastructure that connect them and the flows of people, goods, information and money along the channels . It should be also stressed that the boxes that show within place activities, between place activities, adapted spaces and channels of interaction are essentially containers for conceptual assemblages of life spaces where the forces that are producing the rurban condition are interacting. These are constantly changing in their spatial extent according to their socio-spatial positionality in transactional matrix of flows through channels. For example, the outmigration of rural population to urban areas or indeed their hinterlands for factory employment often results in flows of income earnt in the factories or in situ “non-farm labour to households” located in rural areas. Some of this income earnt in this “outside household income can be used as income to invest in between place activities. For instance, the purchase of a small truck enables “rurban” households to move agricultural products between activity spaces and often develops into a spatially associative networks that can use this money to increase their rural production, or move into off-farm activities within the local areas commitment of their available labor to activities that increase the income of the households in which both rural and non -urban activities occur. This diagram also clarifies the possibilities that emerge to explain the underlying concept of “rurbanity” that emphasize the way rurban activities can contribute to societal developpment. See Figure 2 below:

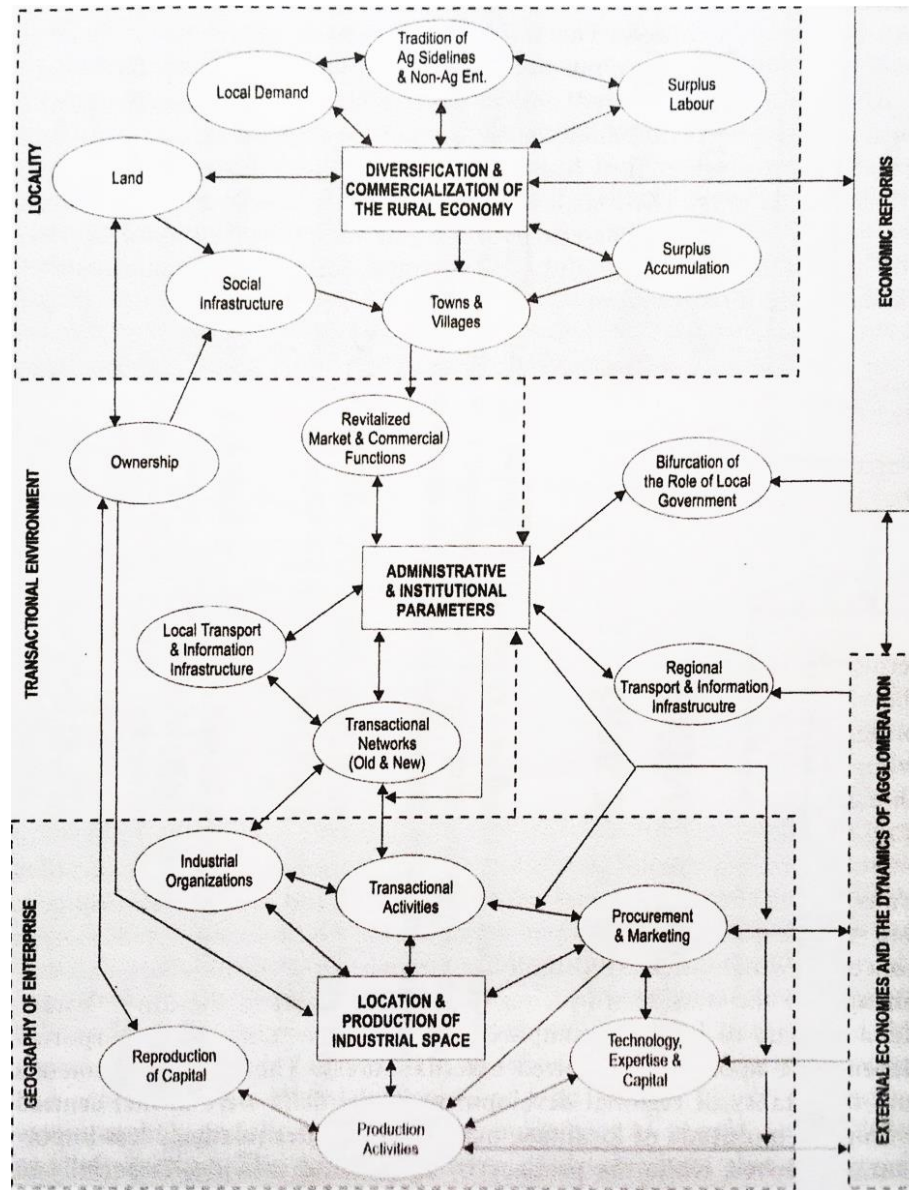


Figure 1. Post-Reform rural transformation and mega-Urbanization in China's lower Yangtze Delta in Marton(2000: p46)

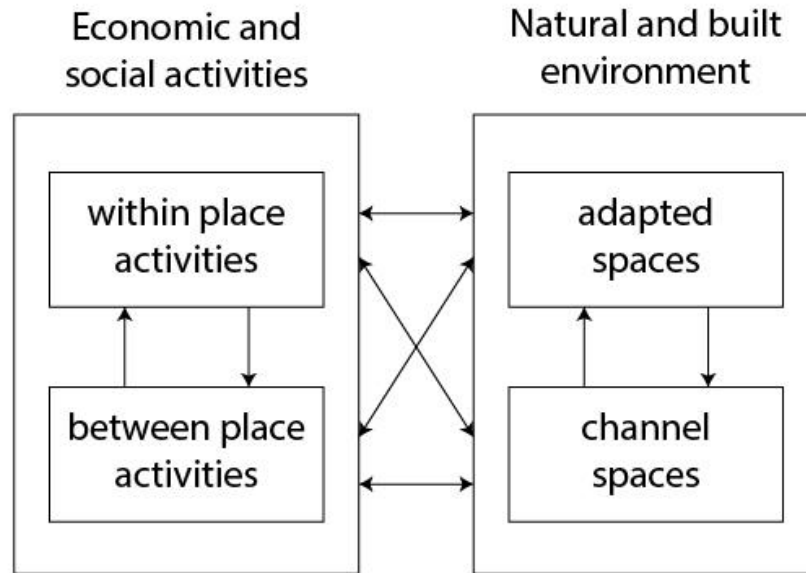


Figure: Connectivity, interactivity and spatial structures

Figure 2

Another approach is adopted by Friedmann(1992) who sees the household as a key factor in alternative development because its operation is central to production of peoples livelihood both in their ability to “pool capital” through social relations of trust, reciprocity involves building networks with kinfolk as for instance in in clan associations that permeate “rurban” territories in China that stretch along the various scales of the local, urban clusters., transportation corridors that Involves building networks with kinfolk as for instance in in clan associations that permeate “rurban” territories. Friedman comments: “We may think of alternative development as series of loops of articulation at different scales- loops that spiral outward from the household economy to progressively domains of social practices(including the economy is dominated by corporate power at macro and meso levels) before returning to the micro level of local communities where households and their immediate concerns become again visible....They are also the way by which the interests and concerns and values arising from within the microsphere of households, with their legitimate political claims for economic and political inclusion penetrate the meso and macro-sphere of social practice and thus also the established spheres of the established relations of power.”(Friedmann, 1992: pp.52-53)

I would argue that the new understandings of the way that rural people in the hinterlands of urban cores create a way to “privilege” the grounded interaction of rural people in the contact with these spatially expanding urban practices is important in policy. It reflects a potential for the people of rural hinterlands to contribute to the development of their nations as well as improve the conditions

of their life spaces in particular both at the level of the household and community of which they are part. There are, of course issues of positionality, conjuncture and broader contextual factors that limit households and communities' ability to increase their income earning activities such as the application of their grounded knowledge and thus hinder their potential for alternative development. In particular the political economy of the national states in East Asia which I discussed earlier in the paper is important in addressing the challenges of , “rurban” people whom rely on the policies of government and the way they govern and formulate policies that have to respond to the particular conjunctions in which rapid societal change is occurring as is the case with the growth of “rurbanity” in the hinterlands of urban areas in East Asia.

But there are other factors that lie within the “domains of “rurbanity” in East Asia that facilitate the processes of “rurbanity” within a developmental and modernizing national state. These are first, paraphrasing Cairns (2018) the fact that many of the areas are located in deltaic regions of their nations in which the cultivation of wet rice agriculture, large populations and high densities attract “a complex mix of land uses and infrastructures” (that co-exist as residual rural villages (gated suburbs, pre-existing cottage industries, shopping malls, golf courses, industrial estates and rice fields) (p120). This enables a transactional environment characterized by the growth of communications through the construction of roads and motor transportation offers the opportunity for the rural people to pursue employment opportunities during seasons of low labor demand in rice agriculture. Thus, in these areas pre-existing rurality is not simply engulfed by the extension of urban activities but rather preexisting rurality uniquely accommodates urbanization effects. Thirdly this section suggest rural agency and the growth of ‘rurbanity’ often exists in an ecological assemblage that allows a range of economic, ecological, land tenure, institutional, technological, and hydrological arrangements to be used as framework for policy aimed to offer trajectory based upon alternative development for the empowerment of the rural populations of these regions of “rurbanity”.

PART FOUR

METHODOLOGIES FOR “RURBANITY”AND ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES: SYSTEMISING PROCESSES OF RURBANITY

In this part of the paper I use case studied to explore different ways of learning about rurban processes. I do this by paraphrasing case studies drawn from grounded research in China. Case studies are needed to thicken-up the information systems that produce micro data that are accessed by various levels of government for developing macro-policy but they also provide information that can be used by the various levels of government to plan for the future of their society. They also provide information that enables to develop policies that could be implemented at local levels

that are more sensitive to local needs. They are an important means of clarifying the complexity of the diverse localities both within China and other parts of East Asia. Originally I had intended to add a third case which would have dealt with the role of households in Malaysia in the outmigration process to urban employment in particular attention to the gender effects of this migration on labor migration and the increased income contributed by these migrants that became an important source of increasing rural household incomes. Unfortunately pressures of time and space have not permitted me to do this. But I have included references to the research was carried out between 1960 and 1990 throughout East Asia. (Mc Gee, 1969; Kamal and McGee, 1989).

Case Study a). Government Policy and the Local Contextual Setting. Hongshan Wuxi Sunan, China (Marton, 2019)

Marton has written a case study of the implementation of government policy In the Chinese countryside in the Lower Yangtse Delta of the Hong Shan urban subdistrict of Wuxi and the creation of an eco-tourism village. A programme that has grown substantially in the region during the last ten years. The focus of the study is to explore through “... a detailed case study of the master planning and local development initiatives that the growth of these eco-villages through time have echoed “... in crafting and implementing the eco-imaginary at the local level and the resulting re-landscaping of the countryside... that is part of the Sunan model of (southern Jiangsu) part of regional development in post reform China” (ibid. p5). Marton (2019) who has a long experience of research in this region adopts a methodology which plots the administrative changes that have created urban spaces that have changed the administrative structure of this area in order to position the case study that has resulted in the loss of rural town and village administrations as they have been absorbed into newly created urban sub-districts. Marton is also concerned with the effect of the administrative reclassifications on the countryside particularly the restructuring of agriculture and food production systems. He uses government statistics to plot the development of a “dual system of commercial food production and leisure consumption that has become pervasive in China’s lower Yangtze Delta” (ibid. p5) which indicate a decline in grain crops (principally rice, and rapeseed and silkworm cocoons. In the period between 1978 and 2017) while in the same period the “output of tea, fruit, aquatic products and fruit grew substantially. This latter trend has been the subject of much research in China. Marton reports that increase in commercial crop production has been the result investments in greenhouses, by town and village collectives, new forms of labor organization, new commercial processing and food distribution networks and the growth of rural grass roots tourism involving peasant families hosting urban guests for fruit picking, rustic meals and lodging”) Marton (2019: p29). The remainder of the study is concerned with detailing the agricultural restructuring that has occurred between 1978 and 2017 and the manner in which the “new language of eco-ideology” results leads to a “reworking of the natural

and socio-economic environments into eco imaginary which involves the local state and planning elites” (ibid. p17) This involves a careful analysis of the analysis of the 20 Year Master Plan based on land use zones in which a specific component are eco-villages of which Hongshan is one. This implementation of these plans began in the spring of 2012. (ibid. p21). In conclusion Marton argues that these government and private sector initiatives have produced mixed activity systems that” challenge old dualisms of urban and rural that highlight the overlapping layers of complex mixed activity systems of projective ecologies to embrace the speculative ambitions of ecological ideas and practices and the tantalizing potential for simultaneous cultural, social and ecological resistance in the Chinese countryside” In this paper Marton has used a methodology in which his twenty years of fieldwork has enabled him to use field observation, interviews, analysis of government statistical data and theoretical understanding to increase our understanding of the processes of landscape change one of the most important results of the study.

Case Study b). Urban diffusion. The creation of digital commerce in “rurban areas”. Urban Diffusion and the creation of consumption spaces.

The growth of “digital commerce” in China is another component of the forces that are driving the “rurbanization “of China’s rural areas. This case study summarises some of the main features of an article in Rural Studies authored by Xiaru Shen and Zuyi Lu (2016) of a village that has experienced a rapid growth of digital commerce since 2011. The village Junpu is located in Xijiang Township Jieyang City in the eastern province of Guangdong Province. By Chinese standards it is a comparatively small settlement of 450 families. Historically the village was involved in the production, processing and sale of biscuits, jellies, chocolates most of which came from the surrounding areas. It has strong cultural identity in the wider region associated with Chaoshan culture that occurs in Guangdong province and is identified by the Cantonese language, regional foods and festivals .By 2012 many of the production and processing activities had declined because of increasing competition influx of migrants who had returned from cities and other areas in Guangdong began using the former production This divided warehouses to open Taobao shops. In 2014, 360 households in the village were running 3880 shops and their numbers increased in the surrounding towns and villages. “Taobao practices have blurred the line between life and work and given rise to an embedded network that has sparked an unprecedented type of hybrid rurality. (ibid. p2). This paper explores how everyday life has been changed in response to e-commerce activities. This has led to changes in household organization and relationship are being restructure at the local level through interfacing of e-commerce activity with the household. While the numbers of households that joined the e-commerce was large the process was not without problems for a number of reasons. First, returning migrants from the cities to run the Tao Bao shops which were provided with computers and office equipment by Taobao division of Alibaba the parent

company. The migrant often had been away for long periods at it took them some time to adapt to the slower pace of the everyday life in the households. They also found the demands of the e-commerce network interrupted the everyday life in the households, particularly the digital requests to prepare orders for Tao Bao clients. One resident who was interviewed commented on the constant ping-pong of the computer delivering requests for orders which occurred throughout the night. This distribution chain was organized on “just in time” model to get orders to the client as soon as possible following the Amazon model of goods distribution which seeks to speed up delivery of the product requested by the purchaser with “just in time” practices. In addition the national government efforts to promote industrial activities that was associated with the “Maritime Silk Road Project” were accepted by the local government and resulted in an invasion of urbanized landscapes” including a large shopping mall. Industrial estates and an enlarged shopping and commercial area which has many banks that has been added to the older villages that were located according to the Master Plan. Thus Junpu village was absorbed into planned urban settlement. Local village people’s reaction to these developments that were recorded in the interviews of the project leaders show that changes produced significant changes in the everyday life of the households in the village which particularly affected the “older residents of the households” who had traditional rhythms of life associated with the old village. Thus the older people saw this development as the “upper place” and lower place” and rarely visited the “upper place” limiting their marketing etc, to the “lower place”.

Another challenge was presented by the rapid growth of Taobao shops where competition intensified and some of the shop owners adopted a strategy of low-price competition in order to reap more benefits. This led to a breakdown in the “...deeply embedded and influential nature of the networked economy, traditional kinship style mutualism an example of which is the assistance of friends and relatives in the village to many Taobao shops.” Thus the daily interactions among the villagers experienced a break down in trust and integrity that had been in place in the village many years. What is interesting about the developments is that the Taobao business owners began work together to form an E-Commerce Association to mediate in this situation. They negotiated an agreement that ensured each store owner would reduce competitive business practices.

The article deals in detail with changes in gender relations both at the household level and within the wider community. As one informant told an interviewer’ “If Taobao could not be run in the home family members would have to work as migrant workers in the faraway cities. Otherwise how do you make a living?” Another aspect of gender relations in the household is that many of the returning migrants were women who moved back into households where they are absorbed into family life in which the mutual support systems of family life such as baby sitting permits them to spend more time in Tao Bao economic activities. Thus increasing their

contribution to household income. Other changes that have occurred since the Taobao “revolution” include a discussion of the effect of the reorganization of the allocation of time by household activities time on household traditional daily routines. Finally, the article concludes that the study has found that Taobao practices have reconstructed a hybrid “rurality” in Junpu village. This rurabarity is shaped by network generated control and network -inspired freedom” (ibid. p8) I regret that I do not have space to discuss this paper at greater length which has been conducted over a period of two years and uses semi-structured in -depth interviews carried out at the household level, participatory observation, data collected from government official documents, news media and Weibo (China’s equivalent of Twitter) and Taobao shop owners. It is an excellent example of the way “soft data” can be collected to reveal the complexity of the invisible world of rural life which is not always collected in data collected at the macro- and meso scales. This section suggests that new methodologies need to be developed to study the changing conditions of rural areas”.

In this exercise it is helpful revisit John Friedman’s (1992) book. to expand on the ideas that have been introduced in preceding sections. Much of the argument is centered on a the rise of a civil society which emphasizes the emancipation of civil society which “strictly speaking...should be used in a plural form which is structured by class, caste, religion, language, regional identity, culture, race and genderto empower, the poor, the marginalized in their nations to asset their basic human rights to take part in a movement to reclaim their human rights as citizens and increased participation in the political processes of the nation if which they are part..(Friedmann (1992) p.vii) These goals have been embraced globally by international agencies such as the United Nations and NGO’s that include increased. autonomy in decision-making of territorially organized communities, local self-reliance but not autarchy), direct (participatory) democracy and experimental social learning which start by being mobilized in “... “...the locality which is the level at which local issues can be most easily mobilized around local issues” (op. cit. p.viii). This occurs at the local scale of both rural and urban areas.” (ibid. p8)

Considering the implications of what Freedman calls an “ideology” of alternative development which suggests the rethinking the economic foundations of an alternative development if it were gain traction in the “whole” economy,” it is a model that articulates market and non-market relations in the production of life and livelihood through a household economy approach that would involve significant changes to the systems of government and institutions of governance nationally. The organizers of this Symposium suggest “innovative governance” as the key towards building up a livable, vibrant and resilient community” in which important issues are, “inclusive urbanization and governance, rights and social inclusion of migrant populations which is major issue for rural migrants who move into urban areas, rural collective property rights, community

capacity building.” In my judgement these topics cover many of the issues that cover the main themes of the Symposium. They provide the opportunity to engage the theme of managing the rural-urban transition in which processes of social and economic change present to the challenges to the development of effective policy responses to the contradictions that emerge in the rural - urban transition about which policy and academic debates abound. But their engagement in the policy and non-policy context involves first of all a recognition that there are real problems in the present context of the East Asia region that are captured by the contradictions of prevailing view that many national governments based on the idea that the rural-urban transition is a necessary institutional component of the creation of a modern society in which the majority of the population live in urban areas that are the catalysts of economic growth in the urban areas that drive that can deliver standards of living to their citizens that are comparable to the developed countries of the world.

The most perplexing challenge of this approach is the information that this approach provides to macro theory particularly for public policies. Governments of the region generally understand the difficulty of absorbing the evidence of case study data into policy formation that can support the development of their societies. The result of case study research do not necessarily resolve the hard questions of how policy can be drawn from case study findings in a research context that is particularly challenging. This no less a challenge when dealing with cross country data which often presents different epistemological and contextual information. What does this mean for the formation of policies that are designed to overcome these challenges of macro domination of the theory of the rural -urban transition in public policy? Another challenge relates to the disciplinary bias that involved in case studies is the issue of how this form of research relates to the current research trends that emphasize the importance of “grounded knowledge as part of a learnt experiential knowledge which are part of the practice of everyday life. The right to the own and practice this knowledge is an important part of the heritage of civil societies which has eroded as they were displaced from their land, their homes and their social and economic practices such as farming. If the argument that I am making here for the emergence of new phase of the urban -rural change is producing a condition of “rurbanity” is correct it actually suggests the emergence of another transitional phase of societal development in which the extension of urban activities into the hinterlands of city core involves a melding together of rural and urban activities then we are charting a trend that has not been clearly recognized in the development policies of East Asia. It also is occurring at a particular conjuncture of the development when East Asia is being threatened by volatility in the global trading system, financial volatility, environmental challenges such as climate change, and growth of populist movements that increase political instability that will affect the sustainability of global and national economies. I would suggest that these macro developments

offer the opportunities for planning alternative development that uses the growth of the “rurbanity” as a framework for developing policies to cope with these challenges.

Clearly if the understanding of the complexities of this emerging “rurbanity” can provide innovative policies that can restructure the institutions of government and governance that strengthen this process of “rurbanity” there has to be a recognition that this process of “rurbanity” is an accelerating condition that needs methodologies that can use micro studies to deconstruct the macro theories of development and counter the city bias in development policies. (see Lansing and Cox, 2019). In particular I would identify the need to prioritize policies that can support the development of their societies. The result of this research do not necessarily resolve the hard questions that remain particularly with respect to the issue of the use of the case study findings and the challenges of developing some common epistemological meaning to the cross-country data for the formation of policies that are designed to overcome these challenges of the macro domination of the theory of the rural -urban transition in public policy. Another challenge relates to the disciplinary bias that is involved in case studies that surfaces in the form of research questions that emphasize the importance of “grounded knowledge”. as part of a learnt experiential knowledge which are part of the practice of everyday life. The right to own and practice this knowledge is an important part of the heritage of civil societies which has eroded as they were dispossessed from their land, their homes, their culture practices.

If the argument that I am making for the emergence of new phase of the urban -rural change characterized by the emergence of another trajectory in which the extension of urban activities into the hinterlands of city core that involves a “knitting together” of rural and urban activities is a correct interpretation then we discovering as trend that has not been clearly recognized in the development policies of East Asia. It also is occurring at a particular conjuncture of the development of East Asia when East Asia is threatened by the volatility in the global trading system, financial volatility, environmental challenges such as climate change, and growth of populist movements that increase political instability that affect the sustainability of the global and national economies. I would suggest that these macro developments offer the opportunities for planning alternative development strategies that uses the growth of the “rurbanity” as a framework for developing policies to cope with these challenges.

Clearly if the understanding of the complexities of this emerging “rurbanity” can provide information for innovative policies that can restructure the institutions of government and governance that strengthen this process of “rurbanity” there has to be a recognition that this process of “rurbanity” as an accelerating process that needs methodologies that can use case studies to deconstruct the macro theories of development and its urban bias in development policies. In

particular I would identify these argument that I am making for the emergence of new phase of the urban-rural transition that shows that the emergence of another trajectory of societal development in which the extension of urban activities into the hinterlands of city core involves a melding together of rural and urban activities is a correct interpretation then we are discovering as trend that has not been clearly recognized in the development policies of many East Asia. countries. It also is occurring at a particular conjuncture of the development of East Asia when it is being threatened by volatility in the global trading system, financial volatility, environmental challenges such as climate change and growth of populist movements that increase political instability that will affect the sustainability of the global and national economies.. I would suggest that these macro developments offer the opportunities for the adopting alternative development policies that use the growth of the “rurbanity” as a framework for developing policies to cope with these challenges.

PART FIVE

CONCLUSION: GLOBAL AND LOCAL FUTURES SOFT PLANNING FOR THE “RURBAN FUTURE” OF EAST ASIA IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

“The future is always present as a promise, lure and a temptation”. Karl Popper.

It has taken me some time to tease out the messages of this presentation. At first I was tempted as are many who write academic papers to use a summary of the paper for the conclusion which might be helpful in helping the audience assess the paper in relation to the symposia’s aims. But I was tempted by Popper’s lure of the future. In 1972 I began a book of essays on Third World Urbanization by suggesting at that two major geopolitical visions of the world in which the urban transition was accelerating dominated the intellectual, political and popular discourses of the day. In the Third World (underdeveloped countries) foppish elites located in the political capitals and largest cities of their countries in which the income disparities between the rich and the poor increased between the urban and rural areas and foppish elites located in the largest cities played luxurious games with power and wealth that they had usurped since independence .In the developed world another vision prevailed. Cities were seen as beach heads, nodes of economic growth from which the benefits of modernization, which are certainly contested by ideas of alternative development, flowed outwards to revitalize the stagnating the impoverished rural areas. It would be foolish to deny that these visions did not have ideological overtones. For Fanon, Frank and Lin Pao the cities of the Third World were the institutional structures that were central to the capitalist mode of production and their growth and economic power increased the contractions

between the rich core and the marginalized rural areas of the underdeveloped world (see Mc Gee, 1971).

Looking at the changes that have occurred in the global system since that date as a consequence of the restructuring of the global economy it has unleashed an era of globalization in which the main processes rely upon increased economic integration, technology innovations in both transportation and information flows that have been promoted by the neo-liberal ideology of the “Washington Consensus to justify these processes. This meant that “...a world system was developed in which the countries whom accepted these developments were increasingly forced to accept the capitalist market logic ”that included capital and information that came from a variety of institutions including the World Bank (2007) and Asian Development Bank (2008.” While this flows of capital, technology flowed to many nations in this emerging world system it was the emerging economies of East Asia that benefited from this process that drew support from this system that provided the incentives for economies that were in many cases recovering from the inadequate inheritance of colonialism and the resolving the challenges created by the need to create independent nations. By the beginning of the 1980’s the growth of the East Asia economy particularly the emerging NICs such as Japan the Republic of South Korea, Taiwan and the city states of Singapore and Hong Kong dominated the East Asian region. By the 1990s they were joined by the largest states in the sub-regions of East Asia- China in North East Asia and Indonesia Southeast Asia and after 2000 Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines (See Ortega, 2016).

But by 2000 there was a growing concern that the economic and geo-political system of globalization was locking East Asian countries into a system in which they felt their ability to negotiate on their own terms was being eroded. This was certainly sharpened by the financial meltdown of the global system that began in 1998, the effects of which challenged East Asian nations for many years by giving their governments to strengthen their demands for a greater role in global geo-politics and the global economy. This resulted in the emergence of bestselling books with titles such as “The Japan that Can Say No” Shintaro Ishihara and Akita Morita, “The Asia that Can Say No” Shintaro Ishihara and Mahathir Mohamed and “The China that Can Say No” by Song Qua and other Chinese journalists. Among these writings there was a common focus that emphasized the need to develop indigenously based theories of social change and development that drew on the common ideals that grew out of them distinctive contexts of the history of religious values and culture of their countries. Kishore Mahbubani (2008) has argued that these views were based on a view that the West still saw Asia as threatening the West’s position as leader of the global economy and that needs to be corrected by the restructuring of the institutions that drive the global system .In the period since 2016 the US in particular has reacted to these arguments by suggesting it will give up its membership of some of these international institutions, for

example, NATO, WTO, etc. and reduce their support to some of the nations in the world system who it is argued are benefiting not suffering from this situation.. In its place the USA is inserting a system of autarchic sanctions of the import of goods from some nations and investment from other countries that will certainly exacerbate and disrupt the existing developments in the “rurban areas” as well as the emerging urban systems of the countries of the region.

These developments pose a major challenge to the processes of spatial, economic, political and social development of many East Asian countries that are still deeply embedded in this global system. I would argue that in order to come to grips with the challenges of that are emerging in the early 21st century we need to construct a “realistic vision” of the future. This may seem difficult as some thinkers have argued that predicting the future is a futile task because it cannot anticipate, for example, the role that new technology may play in changing the conditions that drive visions of the future. Looking for some stimulating points which would enable me to move this dialogue into the future I came across a reference in one of Peter Taylor’s articles (Taylor, 2001 p 107-127) he refers to an article written by Richard Petralla in 1995.) It focused on the future of global urbanization in the 21st century in which he argued that the continuing growth of the global economy would reshape the political and economic configuration of the global urban system. Unfortunately I could only find a brief summary of the article in the Taylor paper(2001) which I summarize here.. Petralla envisages a future urbanized world in which the G7 will be replaced by 30 of the world’s largest mega-urban regions which form the main element of the global multilateral architecture that dominates the world’s economic and political system. This appears to have captured some of the ideas of Sassen’s influential book “The Global City” published in 2010.although it does not go far as to suggest as does Petralla that this new world urban system would be dominated by an alliance of the world’s “merchant classes and metropolitan governments “...whose chief function is to support the competitiveness of the global firms that they host” .Certainly Sassen does not embrace Petralla’s view that this new system would create “a wealthy archipelago of city regions separated from an impoverished world” in which poorer regions formed “disassociated islands” that practiced a “bottom-up form of economic life in which rural and urban divisions are blurred and the informal sector prevails”. Such disadvantaged regions are characterized by political fragmentation, a low level of public service provision and social fragmentation”. To this I would add a third dimension of this global reshaping of the urbanization process which I would suggest may be creation of marginalized spaces which emerge due to global environmental processes and economic restructuring. This vision of the urban future imagines an urbanized future in which geopolitical spatial divisions will no longer be based on national, rural and urban divisions, national income data, trading blocs, but be replaced by security alliances as a way of interpreting the global system. that captures the rationale for the emergence of this global

urban system in order to explain “a new phase of global capitalism, its strategic spaces and its exclusions” (Sassen, 2010: p12)

From the perspective of 2020 and sixty years of research into growth of urbanization largely focused on East Asia this vision of the future may be overdrawn but it remains a provocative challenge to the any policies that emphasize forms of “alternative development” that elevate the role of civil society in the process of development. Certainly if the world came to be organized in the way that Petralla predicts we would need to think of the effect that increased national autarchy will have on the existing urban systems and particularly on the diverse trajectories of intra-spatial and societal change that is occurring in the “rurbanizing spaces” of the mega-urban regions. which by 2050 will have majority of their urban population living in “rurban spaces” (Angel et al., (2005,) (2011) The restructuring in trading systems would also necessitate a rethinking of transport and communication systems that have driven the spatial expansion of urban activities that creates the channels of urban -rural linkage that fuel the growth of “rurban areas”. This opens space for policies that recognize the growing importance of” rurban “areas as melded assemblages of rural and urban activity outside the cores of urban cores of the extended metropolitan spaces.

(Lin G, S.C (1997) (2001) (2005) (2009.)

At this late stage of revision of the paper it is also important to emphasize the public health challenges to the populations of both urban and rural spaces that have emerged with the growth of the pandemic created by the Coruna Virus 19. Today it affected populations throughout the world for it has important implications both for cities and the surrounding regions of East Asia that effects both existing conditions and the future of debates urbanization policy and rural restructuring.

Given that in these areas of extended urbanization in which “rurbanity” is evolving the interfacing process between rural and urban activities are most likely to produce a multiplicity of “rurbanisms” which in some way seem to take on the characteristics of the TVE era in China which from the 1980s drove the initial industrial dynamism of a revolution in China’s industrial system which further accentuates the by the environmental challenges that cause breakdowns in the food, water, and resource networks that are part of these developments. (Peller and Mustapha, 2010) Carter (2003) This focuses the issue of the in-situ capacity in the hinterlands of the large mega-urban regions in East Asia to continue with their present developmental paths. This creates space for “alternative development” strategies such as “people first initiatives’ empowerment and local development that will offer the opportunity for in-situ “rurban alternative development to contribute to the ongoing growth of sustainability, resilience and livable societies. This will certainly mean that the nations of east Asia will have to invest soft capital heavily in social , health and welfare services as well as invest in the hard infrastructure of the built environments (eg. Hospitals, schools, communications etc as well as soft capital of research , training, Much depends

on the potential of these rural spaces to be change inducing spaces that is exhibited in the “bricolage” of landscapes that have grown-up in over the centuries that create the opportunities to become change inducing spaces.(Shane, 2005).

In particular I would focus on the eco-systems that characterize the “rural” regions, that form a vital part the regional system of rural -urban exchanges of the mega-urban regions of East Asia and the efforts that being made to adapt them, to these changing conditions. (see Fabian and Vigano, 2010) Part of this approach would be directed at the strengthening of the existing eco-system through the repair of processes of ecological adaptation in agriculture agricultural water systems, wetlands, etc. (De Groot, 2002; Allouche, Middleton and Grewal, 2014). Undoubtedly this would have to involve government policies that would be able to divert capital to aid these initiatives. But the success of such policies depends upon the ability of governments to be willing to tackle these challenges with the introduction of policies that would focus on these areas which involve a recognition of the need to combine such policies with that recognize the need to tackle these challenges and empower local “rural” communities to participate in the implementation of these policies. This involves the investment in the soft capital investments that improve the health, education and welfare of these communities.(.See Chen Y,Wen Y and Li Z(2017)

Often this policies privilege “city cores” by emphasizing the role that “city cores” play in the creation of national wealth. This means that the economic, social and resource contribution of the of these hinterlands to the overall national economic income is undervalued .One way to develop policies that offer opportunities to strengthen the hinterlands of East Asian mega-urban regions to positions policy development within a wider conception on of the forms of capital that may be deployed to accomplish these goals. The Chilean economist Sergio Boshier (2001) has suggested 8 forms of capital that might be used at the regional level.

- (1) “Economic Capital” that is the stock of financial resources available for investment at international, national, provincial, regional and local scales.
- (2) “Cognitive capital” which is the endowment of scientific and technical knowledge at a regional level.
- (3) “Cultural capital” which has three aspects: (a) The historical development of cultural features that give distinctiveness to a spatial area whatever the scale. (b) the culture of development that exists in a region is a particular set of attitudes towards work, risk, investment etc.
- (4) “Symbolic capital “that represent the ideas and knowledge that are used to construct a region and mobilize the latent recognition of a region, that includes both rural and Urban areas both locally, nationally and internationally.

- (5) “Institutional capital” that relate to what Boshier calls the “institutional fabric of a region” that relates to the institutional chart of a region including government, governance, law etc. but also includes the capacity of institutions to interact with each other and their degree of flexibility, adaptability and resilience.
- (6) Social capital that is the ability of human beings to associate with each other to achieve common goals that involves such components as trust, social participation and ability to negotiate for a common result.
- (7) Physical capital that includes both rural and urban infrastructure. For example, waste disposal systems and irrigation systems. and water distribution systems
- (8) Human capital that is often rather narrowly defined as the knowledge and skills possessed in a region that defines the “quality “of the region, intellectual, practical etc. that can embody a region’s creative powers. More generally it can be defined as the ability to nurture healthy productive humans, livable environments and education.
- 9) To this list I would add the concept of eco-capital that is a form of a capital in which particularly rural farmers apply the knowledge which has been learnt and passed on for generations to the infrastructure, e.g. irrigation practices in their farming. An excellent example of how this comes apart under the impact of introduction of new strains of IR8 in the Bali in which the new rice has completely different demands for the growing cycle and harvesting practices. Thus a highly productive eco-system is placed under threat. (Lansing S (2009) Lansing J.S. and Cox, M.P.(2019) ,Curtis, 2004, De Groot, Wilson, and Boumans, (2005)

While Boshier does not fully interrogate the implications of components of typology as informs ideas of developmentalism that emphasize economic results Type 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8 fall into categories that can be labeled as “soft capital” used in the title of this presentation and suggest the adoption of practices that are needed if policies of alternative development are too develop successfully. In fact, the contribution of this typology is to develop a form of capital that we may call “societal capital” that creates a form of “synergetic capital” that enables local, regional and national collaboration in the management of “societal capital”. Just as “hard planning” has dominated development in China over the last 40 years, soft planning deploying “societal capital” as the leading edge of social development that is necessary for “alternative development” of the emerging “rurban spaces” of the extended urban spaces of China’s mega-urban regions and growing number of secondary cities.

Particularly important in the process will be the need to adapt and preserve eco-systems in these hinterlands and thus I would add the concept of “eco-capital” that represents the capacity of societies to adapt and preserve eco-systems in the face of development and environmental change.

The use of eco-capital, of course, results both from the ability to use all forms of capital combined with the synergies of “eco-capital”. The translation of these ideas into the potential for change at all scales reinforces the view that of locally derived solutions that can play a major role in building societal development that can improve sustainability, livability, quality of life in these regions of rapid growth of the “rurban” condition. This means, “soft planning” must assume more prominence in future planning, involving institutional rejigging, increased consultation with all segments of society, increased consultation between Departments and Governments and in cases institutional re-organisation and policy adjustments. This approach must further recognize the diversity of the eco-systems in the mega-urban regions. Utilizing these ideas suggest six knowledge clusters that could inform strategic planning that would increase sustainability and livability and growth within the East Asia region.

Knowledge Cluster 1 Establishing the strategic policy of sustainability planning utilizing “soft capital approaches” in the Extended Metropolitan Regions (see Soetomo (2002) and (2004); Desakota Study Team (DST), 2008; Carter J (2003) Curtis (2003) Mc Gee T.G (2008)

Knowledge Cluster 2. Understanding the functional integration of the EMRs that is based upon a rapidly evolving network of rural-urban-urban flows of commodities, people, capital, information and resources such as water, land, labor markets etc. While the view that urban areas are the major catalysts of economic growth has much traction among East Asian governments this should be interrogated in the process of policy development and result in policies that give greater emphasis to alternative development.(See Douglass M (2001)and (1998) for excellent studies designed to create regional strategies for reciprocal rural-urban linkages in East Asia.

Knowledge Cluster 3. Developing policies that support developing Governance and Management policies that can mediate between the conflicting goals of urban economic growth and “rurban” sustainability. The vulnerability of the eco-systems to processes of environmental change, global financial and political volatility and penetration by urban activities creates an ongoing challenge to the sustainability of these regions. (see World Bank 2007; Asian Development Bank, 2008)

Knowledge Cluster 4. Understanding the diversity of eco systems in the EMRs in the formation of overall policies for these regions (see Peller M and Mustapha, M(2010). It should be made clear that the “diversity” of eco systems” also characterizes the diversity of activities, historical experience and culture that reflects the diversity of human activities at the local level that in the diversity of responses that are made to the diffusion of urban activities. I a valuable article Alan Smart and George Lin(2007) use a case study of Dongguan in Guangzhou to explain this diversity. They divide this human environment as being divided into three main types.

- (1) “ local capitalism that treats capitalism as subordinate to local and political processes that provide the crucial conditions of existence”
- (2) “Local Citizenship” that sees processes of entitlement occurring locally rather than in national frameworks”
- (3) “Translocality that describes the way in which claims are made on the loyalties of those possessing capital residing elsewhere and the promotion through images building physical social and physical infrastructure enhancements.” In fact as the case studies of Marton and Liu show how translocality also captures the process the population of local villages joining together engage in associative enterprises in translocal network(Xiaru and Lu (2016)

Knowledge Cluster 5. Develop policies that concentrate on generating data that can provide more information on the processes of change that are occurring particularly at the local level that are fueling the growth of “rurbanity” In the hinterlands of the Extended Metropolitan Regions E,MRs This means more data gathering particularly at the household and local regional level that can inform policy.(see Shieh, L (2011;)) Sui and Zeng, 2001; Webster,D, Cai,J., Muller L and Luo B, (2003) Cliff, T(2013) Mc Gee, T.G and Robinson, Ira (1995) ,

Knowledge Cluster 6. Finally research should be devoted to developing methodologies for data gathering that can be used as a basis for policy formation. As I have tried to show in this paper growth of comparative studies at many scales an important part of this process. But here is a need to more critically deconstruct the data that is being collected from the various scales from local (household studies to national as I have learnt from my own research. See Kamal and Mc Gee (1989), Mc Gee (1992) Mc Gee (2012a) (2012b) and Abidin Kusno (2019).

At the national level within East Asia there is evidence that many nations have responded to international agencies by developing sustainability policies that respond to these challenges at the national level but most have much ongoing work to do in developing policies that have convinced the majority of their population of the urgent need for these policies. China as the largest country in the East Asian regions appears to be having some success in developing a national sustainability plan I would argue that there is a growing recognition of this approach in the national policy that was captured by the concept of “ecological civilization” presented by China’s President Xi Jin Ping on August 20, 2017 quoted at the beginning of the paper. The idea of “civilization’ has been harnessed to capture national attention which in contemporary PRC discourse includes both material (urban space, the built environment, consumption and standards of living” as well as “spiritual aspects of civilized people in personal quality and behavior, the opposite of being uncouth, properly educated and showing loyalty to the concept of the nation” (Cliff, T (2013: pp.13-33). This is a long-term vision of a sustainable China that involves a synthesis between environmental. political, and societal reform and economic development that will help China to

resolve contradictions between economic development and environmental change and broad intention to create a “harmonious and united society”. While this long-term vision of a sustainable China first focused on the environmental change it has been widened to include issues particularly in EMRs such as the loss of arable land to urban activities. water resource management, the establishment of a “green financing system” and the improvement of compensation measures to mitigate losses from land transfer. In the core cities measures have been taken against pollution, encouraging the conservation of energy and alternative energy, and the creation of eco-cities as well as the greening of cities have been introduced.

I do not have space to review all these developments but their implementation has been accompanied by the central government decentralizing and enlarging national financial transfers for programmes to increase regional sustainability and local capacity at all scales in which provinces have been given increasing responsibility for planning and implementing these programmes. There is a considerable increase in research on this programme and much discussion on the concept of “ecological civilization” within China, the East Asian region and the developed world. On the term “ecological civilization” see Wen Tiejun , Lau Kin-Chee, Cheng Gunwang (2012) and Zhihe Wang et .al (2014). The latter publication has 110 references to papers written in Chinese and internationally. See also Hillman and Unger, (2013) for a wide ranging collection of essays dealing with the urbanization and rural urban relations which utilises case studies located in selected provinces of China as diverse as Yunnan and Guangzhou. China’s progress in implementing the ideas of incorporating the priorities of “Ecological Civilization” have been endorsed by the United Nations. They include giving priority to resource conservation, environmental protection, the natural recovery of eco-systems which often informed by the “grounded knowledge “of rural villagers that resulted as a result of the investment of societal capital in institutional research and developing pilot studies at the household level. There also is increasing attention being paid to developing networks at village level to adapt to urban diffusion by creating a “rurban condition”. This rests upon a fusion of a shared vision of above ground knowledge and grounded knowledge in a form of “alternative development”. (see Zhu,J and Guo, Y (2012).(See also Abers Anna, (2015) and Bray D (2013) for a discussion of local government approaches to local development in China. At this point in time it still remains problematic as to how rapidly the process of rurbanity will advance in the hinterlands of East Asia EMRs but some research certainly suggests that at least in the case of village elections in Southern China where ‘...the local state has adopted different strategies interventionist strategies in elections to support villagers active participation while sustaining its direct leadership over daily village governance which reinforces “...the ruling capacity of the socialist state rather than enhancing self-governance and grassroots democracy, although villagers now have more opportunities to defend their economic and social rights” (Wong, S.W, Tang,B.S. and Liu,J (2019: p1). This careful study also

suggests that despite their classification as “non-agricultural” status these relocated villagers have retained many of their rural institutions and traditional culture in much the same way as the older population of Junpu in eastern Guangdong Province. In fact, many studies of migrants’ adaptation in the urban areas of East Asia have reported the same persistence of “rurality” within urban areas among rural migrants that has been reinforced by the thickening and speeding up of information between rural and urban areas. The paper which is carefully researched study of the grounded reality of social, economic and political change at the local level in China and much of the remainder of East Asia the process of knitting the rural and urban which I have labeled “rurbanity” is still an uneven process as it becomes a more embedded in the societies of which it is part. I hope that I have made it clear that the growth of “rurban” regions in East Asia contains the “seeds” of their own viable development through the integration of networks of material and immaterial flows and the in situ benefits of density, clustering and grounded knowledge exchange that enable this process to grow.

In conclusion let me return to the discussion in the first part of the paper where I have traced the development of research networks between East Asian countries in order to share the comparative experiences of these countries both as an research learning project and as a means of improving development policies and understanding the growth of “rurban spaces”. So it seems to me that is important that the proposals for developing the China Innovative Governance Urban Rural Governance consider extending their existing network into other countries of the East Asia region from which many ideas can be garnered. My thanks for the opportunity to speak to you.

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Note: The references include both those cited in the paper and other references that are included to show relevant additional literature both on developments in the hybridization of the rural and urban life in China and East Asia.

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