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Snapshot: Expressions of Urban – Peri-Urban – Rural Relationships

Envisioning Urban Ruralisation

Ede, Netherlands

1. Brief Description

Ede's future urban-rural interdependencies will be partly shaped by its urban development. An urban lens on sustainable food production and consumption and eco-system delivery (covering a range of topics as urban agriculture, green, air filtration, micro-climate regulation, noise reduction, rainwater drainage, flood risk reduction, low energy sewage treatment processes, smart grid and smart mobility initiatives, etc.) may inspire future regional spatial planning and sustainability policy, the more so if this envisioning would be accompanied by feasibility ideas, incentive-based policy making and novel governance arrangements.

In line with ROBUST's Glossary (see Deliverable 1.5), we will use the term "ruralisation" to refer to the incorporation of primarily to the rural associated cultural references and practices into urban lifestyles and urban practices.

2. Questions and/or Challenges

Envisioning urban ruralisation processes start with ROBUST's conceptual acknowledgement of different forms of space. By focusing on the significance of relational space, this subject focuses on a series of interesting urban-led initiatives that appear under headings, such as green urbanism, ecological urbanism, and sustainable urbanism in urban studies with different disciplinary backgrounds (see references later on).

For ROBUST this material not only provides the opportunity to further explore ongoing blurring of rural-urban space, but also to identify urban-led reproduction of (assumed) primarily rural characteristics and spatial qualities.

The overarching principle challenge of this inventory would be then:

> How to envision urban ruralisation conducive to sustainable regional development?

3. Main Insights

3.1. Indications of the application of the new concept of 'New Localities'

This topic will concentrate especially on ongoing blurring of rural and urban space. Or, in new locality terminology: it perceives the rural and the urban as relational space with material and symbolical components that are increasingly interwoven and inseparable. The 'urbanization of the rural' and 'ruralisation or the urban', in terms of representation as well as functions, are thought to be illustrative for this two-sided blurring of boundaries. From such a perspective, it is intriguing to imagine future ruralisation of urban space, the more so when its potential interrelations with other topics will be explicitly incorporated in this process.

3.2. Insights related to the broad area of 'Smart Development'

Urban envisioning permits to reflect upon longer term consequences and implications of Food Valley's contrasting sustainability views, with all its uncertainties and unpredictabilities. High-tech, circular and bio- economy inspired urban foodscapes most probably will look rather differently from those inspired by agri-ecological futures. The creative imagination of longer term (hybrid) outcomes of such contrasting sustainability views and pathways for urban futures may stimulate reflexive thinking and acting among Food Valley's stakeholders about possible implications for urban design and spatial planning.

3.3. Other insights that could be relevant for further work

Being part of typical Dutch poly-centric urbanization, with its multifaceted urban-rural proximity relations, on the one hand, and Food Valley, with its controversial ideas on how to strengthen regional rural-urban interaction on the other, makes Ede a rather interesting and intriguing setting for creative envisioning of urban ruralisation processes.

4. Data Sources and Indicators

Urban envisioning knows various disciplinary backgrounds and approaches so learns our inventory of available material so far. Additional data-sourcing opportunity and orientation will require further CoP reflection and agreement. See further also section 6 for so far consulted literature and the variety of topics addressed by this literature.

5. Critical Appraisal of Data Use

Urban envisioning without explicit attention for expressions of ruralisation makes little sense from a ROBUST perspective. Therefore, the imagination of the meaning of ruralisation in urban envisioning around topics as zero-carbon emission, zero-waste, liveability, healthy communities, affordable housing and so on will be most critical in overall data-sourcing activity.

6. References

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