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no. 33 Managing Urbanisation in Papua New Guinea: Planning for Planning's Sake?

Paul Jones



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SERIES EDITOR
Peter Kelly

ALFRED DEAKIN RESEARCH INSTITUTE
Deakin University
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AUSTRALIA

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Managing Urbanisation in Papua New Guinea - Planning for Planning's Sake?

ABSTRACT

Attempts to formulate a national policy framework for managing urbanisation in Papua New Guinea (PNG) culminated with the Somare Government adopting a National Urbanisation Policy (NUP) in June 2010, and its subsequent launch in May 2012, by the Prime Minister, Peter O'Neil. Despite stakeholder momentum gained during its planning and development process, expectations for change at local government and community levels, and declining living conditions in PNG towns and cities, implementation of the policy has been slow and major concerns have been raised.
This paper explores the unique nature of PNG urbanisation and highlights major challenges associated with addressing urbanisation systematically at the national development level. It focuses on defining what urbanisation means in the PNG setting, including the PNG concept of 'cultural permeation of urban areas', the increasing fluidity between urban and rural boundaries, and how this is unfolding in PNG towns and cities. This paper also discusses the main reasons little progress has been made with implementation, including the interplay of 'condition of the state' issues, the messy cross-sector nature of urbanisation, the pervasion of land issues in the urban development process, the non-supportive attitudes of donors, and importantly, the complexity of planning for PNG cultural diversity in urban areas.

Paul Jones
Sydney University

1. Introduction

Attempts to develop and implement a *National Urbanisation Policy* (NUP) for Papua New Guinea (PNG) have had a chequered history. In 1973, PNG's first urban policy was articulated in the White Paper *Self Help Housing and Settlements for Urban Areas*. In 1977, the National Planning Office facilitated another White Paper *Managing Urbanisation in Papua New Guinea.* However, a lack of political will and institutional leadership in the 1980s and 1990s resulted in little implementation. In 1999, urbanisation resurfaced as an issue when the Honourable Dame Carol Kidu, representing Moresby South, raised urbanisation and urban growth management as a national concern in Parliament. While many Parliamentarians at that time did not understand the depth of the issues raised, particularly its social dimensions and rural-urban connections, the topic galvanised their support. This included politicians representing urban centres, such as Madang, Lae and Goroka, where the 'negative' impacts of urbanisation and rural urban migration where being experienced (Office of Urbanisation, 2010).

In March, 2000, a Special Parliamentary Committee on Urbanisation and Social Development was mandated to inquire into the social implications of growing urban centres. In 2002, the Government established the National Taskforce on Urbanisation and Law and Order, with membership drawn from fifteen agencies. However, the large number of agencies with often conflicting mandates proved unworkable. In July, 2003, major steps were taken when the Government approved the establishment of the Ministerial Urbanisation Committee, the National Consultative Committee on Urbanisation and importantly, the Office of Urbanisation, located within the Ministry of Community Development. The latter move reflected recognition of the functional deficiency within Government of a lead organisation responsible for the orderly expansion and planning of PNG towns and cities.

In January, 2005, the Government built on these initiatives by approving an *Interim Urbanisation Policy Statement* to guide urbanisation management in the 2005-2020 period. It also directed the National Consultative Committee on Urbanisation via the Office of Urbanisation to identify and implement key urban pilot projects focused on accessing customary land in the national capital Port Moresby (Taurama Valley) and Goroka (Faniufa), as well as a State lands rejuvenation project in Minj, Southern Highlands, and Tari, Hela Province. Under the direction of the National Consultative Committee, the Office of Urbanisation was also tasked with finalising the NUP to address escalating urbanisation and urban growth issues. Throughout 2009 and 2010, the Office of Urbanisation worked with both urban and rural stakeholders, resulting in the Somare Government adopting the NUP for PNG on 20 June, 2010.

At the Alfred Deakin Research Institute (ADRI) symposium *PNG: Securing a Prosperous Future*, Deakin University, Geelong on 12-13 April 2012, Max Kep, Director of the Office of Urbanisation, argued that there had been a mixed 'stop and start' support for the NUP's implementation since its adoption in 2010. This had occurred despite the Office of Urbanisation being specifically mandated to oversee its preparation and implementation, and high level oversight being provided by a Ministerial Urbanisation Committee. On 13 April, 2012, at the ADRI symposium plenary session which included discussion on escalating urbanisation concerns in PNG, the Honourable Dame Carol Kidu noted that while there had been major gains in developing and agreeing a NUP, its implementation remained an obstacle.[1] There was general agreement that delay in implementation was a major cause for concern given the momentum gained during the NUP's development with stakeholders, the expectations for change at the local government and community levels, and importantly, declining living conditions which continue to resonate in PNG towns and cities (Jones and Kep, 2012). This includes flourishing squatter and informal settlements and failing urban security which characterise urban growth in all main PNG centres, especially Port Moresby, Lae and Mt. Hagan.

1 Dame Carol Kidu did not recontest the eight 2012-2017 Parliament elections in June, 2012. Dame Carol Kidu stood down after serving three terms totaling fifteen years as a distinguished and highly respective member for Moresby South and PNG generally (Chandler, 2012).

Within the context of an endorsed NUP, but an inability at a national level to implement such policy, the objective of this working paper is twofold:

1 to outline PNG urbanisation trends, including understanding the nature of PNG urbanisation; and
2 to explore the challenges of systematically addressing PNG urbanisation, particularly implementation of the NUP at the national level.

2. PNG Urbanisation Trends in light of Pacific Islands Countries

In June 2011, the Pacific Region had a population of just over approximately ten million persons (see Table 1). Based on the most recent censuses undertaken in Pacific Islands Countries (PICs), the average percentage share of urban populations in PICs was approximately 51 per cent.[2] Just over 2.1 million persons resided in Pacific urban areas in 2011, or nearly 21 percent of the regional population. In other words, approximately one in every five Pacific islanders resides in a Pacific town or city.

While PNG is the least urbanised of the PICs, only approximately 13 percent of its population was urban at the 2000 census, PNG has the largest urban populations in the Pacific Region, and Port Moresby is the largest city.[3] PNG also has the greatest numbers of people living in, and concentrations of, squatter and informal settlements in the Pacific Region. The PNG Office of Urbanisation estimated the total urban population of PNG was approximately 1.2 million persons in early 2012, nearly twice as high as the total sub-regional populations of Polynesia (668,470 persons) and Micronesia (546,491 persons). At a regional level, PNG comprises approximately 45 percent of the urban population of PICs. In other words, close to 1 in every 2 urban residents in PICs resides in PNG.

The number of Pacific islanders living in urban areas is skewed by larger Melanesian populations, primarily PNG, and to a lesser degree, the Solomon Islands and Fiji. These countries have the greatest number of people living in urban areas in the Pacific Region, estimated at approximately 1.6 million out of a total Melanesian sub-regional 2011 population estimate of 8.8 million persons. However, their percentage of urban population share is low due to their large rural based populations, as occurs in PNG and Solomon Islands. In contrast to Melanesia, the largest proportions of urban populations are found in the smaller islands comprising Micronesia, followed by Polynesia (see Table 1).

2 Census results (preliminary and full) are available at the Pacific Region and PIC level from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) website. See http://www.spc.int/sdp/
3 PNG was 13 percent urban in the 2000 census. The 2011 results are yet to be finalised and accuracy confirmed.

Table 1: Key Urban Population Indicators for Pacific Island Countries, mid 2011

Country and Pacific Sub-Region	Mid-Year Population Estimate (2011)	Population Growth Rate (%	Capital City or Town	Urban Pop. (%)	Last Inter Census Annual Urban Growth Rate (%)	Last Inter Census Annual Growth Rate Rural (%)	Land area (km)
Melanesia	**8,797,410**						
Fiji Islands	851, 745	0.5	Suva	51	1.5	-.01	18, 271
Papua New Guinea	6,888,297	2.1	Port Moresby	13	2.8	2.7	462, 824
Solomon Is.	553,224	2.7	Honiara	20	4.7	2.5	28, 370
Vanuatu	251,784	2.6	Port Vila	24	3.5	1.9	12, 190
New Caledonia	254,525	1.3	Noumea	67	2.3	-0.7	18, 576
Polynesia	**668,470**						
Cook Islands	15,576	0.3	Rarotonga	72	2.6	-1.4	237
Niue	1,446	-2.3	Niue	36	-1.1	-2.3	259
Samoa	183,617	0.3	Apia	21	-0.6	0.7	2, 935
Tonga	103,682	0.3	Nuku'alofa	23	0.5	0.4	650
Tuvalu	11,206	0.5	Funafuti	47	1.4	-0.2	26
American Samoa	66,692	1.2	Pago Pago	50	2.4	1.7	57,291
Tokelau	1,162	-0.2	Nukunono	0	-	-4.6	1,151
Wallis and Futuna	13,193	-0.6	Mata-Utu	0	-	-2.1	13,445
French Polynesia	271,831	1.2	Papeete	51	0.7	1.8	259,706
Pitcairn Is.	66	-	-	-	-	-	-
Micronesia	**546,491**						
FSM	102,360	0.4	Kolonia	22	-2.2	1.0	701
Kiribati	102,697	1.8	South Tarawa	44	1.9	1.8	711
Marshall Is.	54,999	0.7	Majuro	65	1.6	1.3	181
Nauru	10,185	2.1	Yaren	100	-2.1	-	21
Palau	20,643	0.6	Koror	77	0.0	3.9	444
Guam	192,090	2.7	Hagatna	93	1.8	-1,4	154,805
Northern Mariana Is.	63,517	-0.1	Saipan	90	3.7	2.3	69,221

Source: Adapted from Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) Pacific Island Population Estimates and Projections, April, 2012.

PNG has the largest number of number of towns and cities in the Pacific Region - 3 formally declared cities (the capital Port Moresby, plus Lae and Mt. Hagan) and 17 towns. In the 2000 census, the Port Moresby population was 254,158 persons, or just over one third of the then PNG urban population of 675,403 persons (National Statistics Office, 2003). In 2008, Port Moresby's population was estimated at approximately 410,000 persons (UN-Habitat, 2008), and at the end of 2010 was estimated to account for approximately 45 to 50 percent of the national urban population of one million persons, namely, around 450,000 to 500,000 persons. Major issues of under enumeration plague reliance on questionable census data, with the preliminary PNG 2011 census indicating the Port Moresby population as only 318,128 persons (or a growth of 8,400 persons per year since 2000).[4] Using the rate of expansion of unplanned settlements as one indicator of urban growth, the urban population of Port Moresby at the beginning of 2012 was best estimated in the range of approximately 500,000-750,000 persons (Jones and Kep, 2012).

Port Moresby is located within the National Capital District (NCD), a province of some 240 km² classified as urban, and containing a peri-urban hinterland. Between 1980 and 2000, the annual average growth rate of Port Moresby was four percent, with some 58 percent of the NCD population being migrants from other provinces. The 2000 census estimated 90 percent of these migrants had moved to Port Moresby in the 1990-2000 period, with most migrants taking up occupation in the settlements (Chand and Yala, 2008). "People have migrated here to Moresby looking for the land of milk and honey, and have found instead a place that is not so rosy" (Port Moresby Governor, Powes Parkop, cited in Callick, 2010). This migration has contributed significantly to a growing landless class of population now living in squatter and informal settlements in and around Port Moresby, trying to cope with the realities of urban poverty (Jones, 2012).

While squatters and settlements are vilified in political rhetoric and PNG media as a major disease of urbanisation, they have now become a permanent feature of the PNG urban landscape, especially in Port Moresby (Jones, 2012c). In 2006, the National Capital District Commission (NCDC) estimated some 40 percent of the Port Moresby population were living in settlements (NCDC, 2006), while in 2008 this estimate had risen to 45 percent (AusAID, 2008; UN-Habitat, 2008). In Port Moresby in 2008, there were 20 planned settlements and 79 unplanned settlements, with some 42 unplanned settlements located on state land, and 37 on customary land (UN-Habitat, 2008). In the coastal city of Lae, it is estimated over 50 percent of the city's population lives in settlements, with rural urban migrants coming primarily from Mamose, the New Guinea islands and Highlands Region (The National, 2012). The number of settlements continues to rise with squatter and informal settlements a common feature in all of PNG's 3 cities and 17 towns (Office of Urbanisation, 2010).

3. Defining Urbanisation in the PNG and PIC Setting

Mainstream concepts of Pacific urbanisation define it as a process of transition involving the movement of people from rural areas to towns and cities, accompanied by major social, economic, and environmental change (Connell and Lea, 2002; Jones, 2011a). By its nature, Pacific urbanisation is a cross-sector issue featuring pronounced changes in:

- the structure and form of towns and cities, including the permanency of settlements;
- behaviour, including modifying social values, norms, attitudes, and expectations;
- population and demographic patterns;
- community control systems operating alongside state rules and regulation, and
- lifestyle and family relations (Jones, 2011b).

4 In January, 2012, the Government branded the 2010 deferred National Census operation as a failed exercise. Prime Minister Peter O'Neill cited long delays in the release of the summary count data, and raised concerns about the effective use of the K100 million allocated for the nationwide "Count Me In" exercise. See "2010 National Census is a failure", Post-Courier, Wednesday 18 January, 2012.

Urbanisation in the Pacific Region is a relatively recent and cross-sector phenomenon, emerging in the post colonial era and gaining prominence in PIC national affairs as governments and communities grapple with the responsibilities associated with independence and determining their own future. The urbanisation process has been erratic and uneven, as populations have generally increased and PICs have been drawn into wider patterns of regionalisation and globalisation, including international migration. The urbanisation process has been led by strong population growth and rural urban migration, without accompanying growth in economic development opportunities (see Figure 1). Where there have been sustained periods of economic growth and development performance, such as in PNG, the fruits of this growth have not trickled back to the bulk of the population (National Research Institute of PNG, 2010). Separating notions of what comprises a rural village or an urban village via neatly defined boundaries, physical and otherwise, has become increasingly difficult. In this setting, PNG towns and cities have become complex systems of social, economic and environmental forces.



Figure 1: The image used in PNG to portray rural urban migration and the cultural permeation of urban areas (Source: Office of Urbanisation, 2010).

The meaning of urbanisation in PNG has gradually altered over the last fifteen years. In the 1980s and 1990s, pro-rural development theories dominated, with towns and cities seen as negative influences in national development. It was argued overcrowding and pressure on services and infrastructure could be alleviated by reducing the flow of rural urban migrants, and simultaneously increasing the emphasis on rural development programs. Urban living was seen by some PICs as isolating islanders from their cultures, traditional values and norms that were firmly anchored in living a 'full' life in rural villages (Pacific Institute of Public Policy, 2011). Such a view still influences national and regional policy settings, and underpins many anti-urban sentiments seen in PNG and other PICs. These anti-urban biases have strong implications for the way in which PNG urban areas are viewed and conceptually constructed in the context of urban management and urban development (Jones, 2012).

In the new millennia, there has been a gradual but noticeable shift in the way urbanisation is perceived in PNG. While pro-rural thinking continues to strongly shape the development

agendas of government and development partners, urbanisation is increasingly being seen as a key lever to bring about the transition of traditional societies to modern ones. In 2010, the PNG Minster for Lands and Physical Planning, the Honourable Lucas Dekena, stated that urbanisation is about modernising rural villages, communities, districts and towns, so that the benefits of urbanisation are widespread, rather than enjoyed by a small percentage of the population (Dekena, 2010). Balanced spatial development based on functioning service centres is seen as a key principle in promoting more effective management of PNG urbanisation. "Urban is civilisation and civilisation is modern, and modern is service delivery efficient" (Kep, 2011a).

There is increasing recognition in PNG of the importance of urban areas as major drivers in generating national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and improving human development, as expressed in the recent *Development Strategic Plan 2010-2030*. This is viewed as being achieved through leveraging off concentrations of population and economic diversity in formally designated and supported economic development corridors (Department of National Planning and Monitoring, 2010). In its broader context, PNG urbanisation is essentially about aligning the process of organising and utilising urban and rural town resources more efficiently and equitably than at present.

4. A Key Element of PNG Urbanisation - the Cultural Permeation of Urban Areas

The nature of PNG urbanisation is unique and understanding its genesis is pivotal to explaining how urban growth issues, especially escalating concentrations of squatter and informal settlements, express themselves in the PNG urban landscape. Central to the PNG urbanisation process is the interplay and intricacies of the varying socio-cultural orders which underpin the lifestyles of diverse ethnic groups and how this unfolds in the urban setting. Developed to describe the uniqueness of the PNG circumstances, the term 'cultural permeation of urban areas' reflects the merging of ethnic socio-cultural orders into the urbanisation process shaping towns and cities (Office of Urbanisation, 2010). In 2009, this concept was developed with stakeholders to conceptualise how traditional norms and values associated with rural urban migrants and their kinship groups are expressed within the urban setting.

The concept is fundamental to understanding the patterns of wider PNG urbanisation and the many factors which define the urban context, including strong cultural diversity, and the country's predominantly rural character where most of the population survive via subsistence economies. This concept helps explain PNGs urban form, structure and socio-economic behaviour associated with what has been termed in the PNG setting the emergence of 'village cities'. The latter is where the creation of squatter and informal settlements (villages) dominates the city's physical space, and there is little State redistribution of services and infrastructure. Self organisation in housing, subdivision, land tenure, and livelihoods prevail (Jones, 2011c). Not only do people identify with individual villages, but the city as a whole is viewed as a 'village'. Port Moresby's Governor, Powes Parkop, declared in a commentary on the future image of Port Moresby: "Many of us are probably migrants from the Province to the City but the City has now become our home and our village" (Powes Parkop, 2012: 2).

The escalating growth of settlements in Port Moresby has been recognised for some time as "cosmopolitan networks of tribal groupings or anarchical sub-cultures, which have been defined by ethnicity and regionalism within an urban context" (Muke et al., 2001: 7). In certain informal settlements in Port Moresby, kinship and *wantok* systems play a crucial

support role for people and households experiencing hardship and poverty. This system is more pronounced where settlements grow along ethnic connections and allegiances, such as in the case of Four Mile Settlement, where settlements represent enclaves, or a series of enclaves of kinship supporting squatter settlers primarily from the Southern Highlands region (Jones, 2011a; Mawuli and Guy, 2007). However, it has been argued that applying the communal sharing cultures common to Pacific islanders in 'ghetto'-type situations, for example, can constrain the use of existing economic development opportunities by settlers to improve their lifestyles. "In the ghettos, the home cultural values predominate and Pacific peoples behave as they do in their home villages" (Duncan, 2007: 928). In the PNG context, norms and values including notions of egalitarianism and sharing, can be argued as entrenching key aspects of PNG urban form, such as squatter and informal settlements, thus reinforcing Port Moresby image as predominantly a 'city of villages'.

With a melting pot of diverse ethnic groups, values and attitudes characterising PNG urban areas, a potentially volatile urban environment has evolved, underlain by major urban security concerns. Violence and conflict in PNG has been an issue of concern in homes, villages and urban areas for some time, with marked differences between ethnic groups and their behaviour in rural and urban areas (Kidu, 2000). In Port Moresby, *rascalism* continues to rise in the new millennium, based on a youth gang culture and tensions of ethnic violence centred on customary norms, values and responses applied to conflict situations. In the 1980s, they emerged in Port Moresby as 'nuisance gangs', with *rascals* staking out territorial occupation rights and surviving from criminal activity. As a result, *rascals* have become highly organised in using violence and crime, thus perpetuating a culture of fear and uncertainty (see, for example, Kidu, ibid).

Tribal fighting and violence, a traditional response to conflict between ethnic groups in PNG, is now part of mainstream life in major urban centres. "It is not uncommon for violent ethnic clashes to break out. Port Moresby, Lae and Mt. Hagen have all borne the brunt of them" (The National, 2012: 8). Stereotyped as being associated with the growth of settlements, violence and crime is justified by tribal customary law (and its diversity) and has been facilitated in urban areas by limited human and economic development opportunities, including rising levels of urban (and rural) poverty. Researchers such as Levantis (2000) have argued that insecurity and crime in Port Moresby are both an economic response to survival, and an activity that is socio-culturally tolerated and accepted by many kin and ethnic groups. Over-regulation of informal activities, weak policing, limited formal employment, and the ease of access to income from crime have all helped to entrench such activity as an accepted component of urban life in Port Moresby (Levantis, 2000).

In the above setting, the robust social, cultural and economic connectivity between PNG urban and rural areas reinforces the perspective that the distinctions of a discrete urban-rural divide, including notions of village to town, town to city, rural village versus urban village, and modern and traditional analogies, are not rigid dichotomies. Increasingly, the influence of what can be defined as 'urban' in PNG is far and wide as both urban and rural residents shape and reinforce their identity by associating with urban kin who have come from the same village, clan, tribe, district, province or outer island. The importance of the relationship with one's extended family and maintaining this relationship in varying ways in the urban (and rural) setting underlies PNG social identity and colours the nature of PNG urbanisation. With increasing transport and communication options, including the growth of mobile phones and ease of sending remittances, the boundaries and borders between 'urban and rural' are more blurred than ever before. While some generational urban residents maybe detached from their village kin and customs, others maintain strong allegiance to the family unit, sub clan, clan, and tribe or island group. Table 2 indicates the range of lifestyle changes being played out in the PNG rural urban continuum (Jones, 2011a).

Table 2: Understanding PNG Urbanisation through the Lens of the Rural Urban Continuum

Socio-Cultural Feature	Features as Expressed in the Rural Setting	Features as Expressed in the Urban Setting
1. Marriage	* can be prearranged – no say in choice of husband or wife * may involve 'bride price' payment * large ceremonial obligations involving family, village, clan, tribe and so on * marriage restricted to being within similar island – geographic group, tribe, clan or cultural group	* larger choice of partners * women have greater freedom from village – less influence of family socio-cultural ties and restrictions * choice of venue and ceremony * marriage within or outside of settlement and urban village
2. Births and Deaths	* large ceremony on reaching one year of age * death is mourned by family and clan - all work stops * burial within 2-3 days * burial place can be next to house	* mourning for a death can be over a lengthy and extended period * burial can occur over extended period - mortuary allows longer period while waiting for family members * use of public cemetery for burial
3. Language	* own dialect in homogenous groups * dialect not physically recorded	* exposure to English * use of pidgin * English training centres * exposure to range of dialects * exposure to a range of languages
4. Economic Activity and Development	* development based on subsistence and or cash farming of varying commercial scale * for some, work only carried out as needs have to be met * informal sector employment * little regulation	* greater need for cash for survival * varying levels of informal and formal sector employment and opportunities * residents have some or no gardens * reliance on local produce – imported goods * rules and laws impact on business opportunities, types of street vending
5. Dress and Appearance	* traditional dress reflects importance and seniority * dances and ceremony on special occasions	* dress modern style anytime * dancing and recreation anytime * no peer group pressure on style – type of dress
6. Housing	* traditional design * traditional materials mixed with permanent materials (roofing iron, blocks, etc) * special built structures reflect functionality * accommodates extended family	* permanent and semi-permanent materials used * modern house provides many functions * connected to modern services (legal or illegal)
7. Kinship Arrangements	* strong kinship arrangements handed down through generations * social and biological basis * socialise within kinship group * strong family and wider clan care and control of children * homogeneous communities based on unity of families and clans	* concerned with only immediate social and biological kin * can mix with any group * breakdown of parental and wider family care * heterogeneous communities – migration maybe individual rather than whole of family * urbanisation impacts on children including dietary changes, abuse, exploitation, etc
8. Land	* primarily in customary ownership * family and wider group such as clan involved in land distribution * land rights oral – not recorded in writing * land use rights can be fluid and not definitive * lands associated with families, clans and tribes	* land can be freehold, lease or customary * land has greater economic use and value * land ownership endorsed by Courts and recorded in registers * land used as a commodity * individual title can be given to land * informal arrangements on use and ownership
9. Law and Order	* retribution * pay back * 'eye for an eye' * compensation payments * village and clan rules and controls * limited formal system intervention	* formal system rules and controls acknowledged but often ignored * retribution * pay back * 'eye for an eye' * compensation payments * settlement rules and controls
10. Settlement Patterns	* dwellings in contained village arrangement or dispersed * traditional layout of buildings * low density, minimal or no reticulated services * village occupants associated with clear land areas for gardening and farming * limited transport systems	* planned and informal settlements * varying degree of services and infrastructure * high density * western style architecture * environmental degradation * access to airports and ports – greater flexibility of movement * high urban security, law and order concerns * concentrations of ethnic enclaves

Source: Adapted from the Office of Urbanisation, 2010: Jones, 2011a.

5. The Response - the National Urbanisation Policy (NUP)

The NUP as adopted in June, 2010, examined PNG urbanisation from two perspectives.

- The benefits of urbanisation - including the direct and indirect production of GDP generated in urban areas (especially in the service sectors), increased concentrations of informal activities, income levels, health and education facilities (compared to rural areas), mobilisation of customary and state lands, and plans and policies which provide a spatial dimension and align with national economic plans (namely, the PNG Vision 2050 and corridor development planning as contained in the PNG Development Strategic Plan 2010 - 2030).
- The negative consequences of unmanaged and unplanned urbanisation - including the urbanisation of poverty, escalating squatter and informal settlements, unmaintained services and infrastructure, law and order issues, and ineffective governance arrangements increasingly divorced from the pressing needs of the people.

The NUP responded to the above by identifying five key implementation components. The first three are the subject of a national urbanisation implementation plan currently being prepared.

- Component One - the provision of primary infrastructure and services.
- Component Two - the development of sites and services on State and customary lands.
- Component Three - the development and rejuvenation of provincial and district service centres.
- Component Four - building capacity to better manage urbanisation, urban management and development.
- Component Five - the development of national urbanisation and urban management policies and plans (Office of Urbanisation, 2010).

On 17 May, 2012, some two years after its endorsement, the Prime Minister, the Honourable Peter O'Neil publicly launched the NUP at Minj, Wahgi Valley. The launching was undertaken as part of establishment day for the new Jiwarka Province, the latter created by its separation from Western Highlands province (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Highlanders in traditional ceremonial dress from Mendi who travelled to the launch of the NUP in Minj by the Honourable Peter O'Neil, Prime Minster of PNG, 17 May, 2012 The Prime Minister committed 16 million kina to implementing the NUP. (Source: Author).

While the NUP is now adopted, building and maintaining a coalition of support for change and implementation has brought many frustrations for those seeking improved urban outcomes. A key question being asked is why has there been little implementation and political will to move forward? While there are a number of challenges to promoting implementation of the NUP, those having the biggest impact in constraining the improved management of PNG urbanisation can be summarised as follows:

- *'Condition of the State' issues.* Improving PNG urban management systems in circumstances where conditions of the state are fragile remains problematic. The macroeconomic setting of government, law and order, and policies for the orderly access to land, finance, education and health services, including socially constructed barriers, need to be addressed at the national, city and town levels. "In PNG cities, the first change is 'order, peace and harmony' to replace chaos, mayhem and anarchy before we *tok* sustainability and resilience" (Kep, 2011a:16). Positioning urbanisation as a national issue requiring national solutions is just as important as developing town or city based interventions. Thus, undertaking town and city initiatives must go hand in hand with addressing wider structural issues affecting the performance of the state. This includes targeting gains in human development, and a more equitable distribution of income to support living standards, which to date has eluded the bulk of the population (National Research Institute of PNG, 2010).
- *Cross-sector nature of urbanisation and the urban sector*. Urbanisation and urban sector plans and policies are cross-sector and multi disciplinary, and are therefore potentially messy and muddy in their design, development and implementation. Effective urban management requires individuals and organisations to work cooperatively to strategically address cross-sector issues, including sensitive matters such as land tenure (Jones, 2007). This often requires the policy, institutional and regulatory systems underlying the performance of urban areas to be addressed in a coordinated manner, which in turn can often conflict with national development plans and donor partnership agreements which are sector led and address mainstream health, education, agriculture, tourism, and other economic sectors. In PNG, the challenge becomes further problematic when opposition to major cross-sector issues such as urbanisation is cast as a means of reducing crime, unemployment and the spread of disease attributed to settlement growth (such as cholera, dysentery and influenza).
- *Cultural diversity and how best to plan for this diversity.* Of all PICs, the PNG urban fabric is most complex in terms of the scale and heterogeneity of ethnic groups. Cultural diversity permeates the wider urban area, and is best expressed in the multitude of permanent and semi-permanent governance arrangements that exist in the settlements. Violence and tribal clashes are increasingly the norm as ethnic diversity interacts to safeguard settlement enclaves. How best to plan for such diversity when formal systems dominate the allocation of financial and other resources in planned areas and norms and values vary so widely throughout the nation's urban centres remains a point of contentious debate. "It (Port Moresby) is the one area of the country where all the thousands of tribes and language groups that form our nation congregate. What transpires in Port Moresby therefore impacts the nation. If Port Moresby is promoting good virtues and values and is socially and economically progressing, the whole nation will also lift. If Port Moresby is a quagmire of crime, violence, ethnic conflict and rubbish, Papua New Guinea will also suit" (Powes Parkop, 2012: 2).
- *Land issues*. Land issues pervade all urban development projects and the broader urban management framework of PNG towns and cities (Yala, 2010). Local and national politicians are nervous of the unintended and unknown consequences of urban development projects, especially those on customary land. Adjusting and fine-tuning land tenure systems, such as mobilising land in localities where urban growth pressures are strong and land values are rising, triggers tensions and internal disputes with landowners and landowning groups. Seeking clan and ethnic unity in land development proposals is a messy process, exacerbated by: (i) the slowness and bureaucratic nature of the formal planning system's requirements on urban customary landowners and their clan members

(such as copies of birth registration to confirm legitimate clan membership), and (ii) the desire by some clan members to use land as a short-term tool to alleviate immediate poverty and survival concerns, rather than adhere to the wider long-term views of the clan.

- *Donor attitudes.* Few donors prioritise the management of PNG town and city growth. There has been little interest in the threat of unmanaged urbanisation, despite the unprecedented scale of urban change and rising urban poverty. Without a unified coalition of change, other well intentioned local efforts will become a futile exercise (Kep, 2011b). AusAID, the region's largest donor, has some health and education projects underway in urban areas, but an integrated approach to the urban sector is not a priority organisational development theme. Their forays in providing technical assistance to PNG's urban sector have been short-lived and reluctantly provided, with funding to central government functions, such as Treasury and Finance, having priority over urban focused agencies such as the Office of Urbanisation. Provision of support for the urban sector has been argued by AusAID as not being identified in the overarching Government of Australia and PNG Development Cooperation Strategy (Jones, 2012). It should be noted, however, that the lack of interest in urban sector programs by donors and development partners is a global phenomenon, and is not a position unique to PNG or the wider Pacific Region (see, for example, House of Commons, 2009). The following observation in the *Islands Business*, 2011, sums up the position for both PNG and the Pacific Region.

  "Donor priorities: One regional observer was asking WHISPERS why AusAID and other agencies including the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat are not interested in urban and the plight of the poor. One would have thought there will be great interest in this area when one notes the increasing percentage of people now living in the urban areas. In Fiji, for instance, there are now more people in the urban areas than in the rural areas. In PNG, AusAID has discontinued a project focusing on land development with services for customary landowners, and upgrading informal settlements. They said it was low priority and high priority was finance, economic planning, etc. It's also interesting that MDG 7D—improving the lives of slum dwellers—hardly rates (or is not mentioned) in any Pacific Islands' MDG reports, as well as the AusAID 2008 regional MDG report. So, what happened to MDG 7D in the Pacific?" (Islands Business, 2011: 5).

- *Addressing causes rather than consequences in the urbanisation debate*. The connections between the health of the rural and urban domains are still not widely understood and appreciated, despite their historically discrete boundaries becoming increasingly fluid. Not surprisingly, the debate on development is still anchored in rural based solutions stemming from visions of an economic revival based on rural development, as well as idyllic utopian notions of the richness of life attained in the setting of the rural village. Addressing regional inequalities and unbalanced spatial growth still has little traction in the urbanisation debate, despite rising levels of rural and urban poverty. Similarly, no effort has been made to improve economic efficiency by targeting investment in the best performing urban sectors, despite the significant proportion of GDP generated in urban areas (Asian Development Bank, 2012).

Conclusion

Despite a Government emphasis on undertaking planning process and clarifying outcomes, mainstreaming the NUP into development policy and practice remains at an impasse. Management of urbanisation in PNG continues to be sidelined as a major national and town and city development issue. This has occurred despite increasing dialogue about the nature of the wider urbanisation process, and importantly, the symptoms of such change having been brought clearer into public focus within the last decade. Despite a national PNG urbanisation policy in place, including its high level endorsement and recent launch by the Prime Minister, there is still a reluctance to roll out the levels of actions required to address the underlying causes and symptoms at both the national and town and city levels. Appreciating that urban development and other urban based activities are best understood when viewed within an urban management and national development framework still remains a foreign concept.

The reality of PNGs 'condition of the State' issues, including economic management, governance, political instability and rising poverty levels, combined with increasing ethnic diversity in the urban setting (with strong connections to land tenure, social order and place of origin), make it difficult to systematically address urban issues. The diversity of ethnic groups as concentrated in higher density urban settings has become both a dividing and unifying force in leveraging orderly urban change. These concentrations more often than not intensify simmering friction between ethnic groups and local residents, including business groups and landowners. With limited social homogeneity, the potential for urban conflict is high. Considering the nature of this urban fabric, key donor development partners remain reluctant to provide support to a difficult cross-sector area, providing minimal technical, institutional and capacity building assistance to national and town and city systems that underpin cross-sector urban improvements. This situation becomes more complicated when settlements - now the dominant form of urban growth in all PNG towns and cities - are continually portrayed as negative, and characterised as 'breeding grounds of criminals' and ethnic conflict and as places rife with illegal business dealings and crime (see, for example, Kolo, 2009).

PNG urbanisation is an "inevitable choice" which "must be viewed in its entirety and not just from region to region or province to province basis" (The National, 2012: 44). The challenge for those in PNG who seek better urban quality of life outcomes is to find the right 'entry point' into the national development debate, thus balancing the importance of, and linkages between the health of urban and rural areas and improved urban living conditions. The adoption and launch of the NUP are important milestones, but such planning provides little value if improvements to people's quality of life cannot be realised in the short term. PNG has a unique brand of urban growth coupled with a complex urbanisation process unparalleled in the Pacific Region. The overarching challenge is how to achieve the benefits of well managed urbanisation in the context of rich cultural and ethnic diversity that continues to be played out and expressed in PNGs urban form, structure and broader urban condition.

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