Topic: Patterns of Urbanization at Global Context

Introduction

By definition, urbanization refers to the process by which rural areas become urbanized as a result of economic development and industrialization. Demographically, the term urbanization denotes the redistribution of populations from rural to urban settlements over time. However, it is important to acknowledge that the criteria for defining what is urban may vary from country to country, which cautions us against a strict comparison of urbanization cross-nationally. The fundamental difference between urban and rural is that urban populations live in larger, denser, and more heterogeneous cities as opposed to small, more sparse, and less differentiated rural places.

Causes of Urbanisation

1. **Industrial revolution:** Industrial employment catches the attention of people from rural to urban areas. In the urban areas, people work in modern sector in the occupations that assist national economic development. This represents that the old agricultural economics is changing to a new non-agricultural economy. This is the trend, which will build a new modern society.

2. **Emergence of large manufacturing centres:** The emergence of large manufacturing units provide means of livelihood and people from rural areas migrate to work in these manufacturing centres.

3. **Job opportunities:** There are ample job opportunities in mega cities therefore village people or individuals from town frequently migrate to these areas.

4. **Availability of transportation:** Due to easy transport, people prefer to stay in big cities.

5. **Migration:** Migration is main cause for rapid growth of mega-cities. Migration has been going on over centuries and it is normal phenomenon. When considering urbanization rural-urban and urban-rural and rural-rural migrations are very important. Urban-urban migration means that people move from one city to another. People may move to the city because they are forced by poverty from rural community or they may be pulled by the magnetism of city lives. Combination of these push and pull factors can force people to migrate to cities.

6. **Better Infrastructure facilities in the urban areas:** Infrastructure has vital role in the process of urbanization in the development of countries. As agriculture becomes more fruitful, cities grow by absorbing workforce from rural areas. Industry and services increase and generate higher value-added jobs, and this led to economic growth. The geographic concentration of productive activities in cities creates agglomeration economies, which further raises productivity and growth. The augments income and demand for agricultural products in cities.

Factors leading to Urbanisation

There are several aspects that lead to urbanization. These factors can be categorized into three categories that include, economic opportunities, proper infrastructure and utilities and availability of public facilities.

- **Economic opportunities:** It is general perception that living standard of urban area is superior as compared to village areas. People consider that more job opportunities and more jobs are offered in the city instead of rural area. Besides, the income also will be higher.

- **Proper infrastructure and utilities:** In today's economy driven society, majority of nations in the world are focusing on the development of major cities as the centre of government and business. As such, the cities will be certainly equipped with a better infrastructure and utilities such as roads and transportation, water, electricity and others. Apart from that, the communication and internet coverage also are good in the cities which are believed as one of the pulling factors of migration.

- **Availability of public facilities:** To make smart city, metropolitan cities also offered better public facilities which are not there in rural areas. Since a variety of public facilities such as health and education are provided in the cities, people have more choices either to use public or private. Additionally, the provision of leisure area, postal services as well as police station and others are also provided to meet the needs of the urban community. In urban area, a greater variety of entertainment such as restaurants, movie theatres and theme parks attract more people to live in cities.
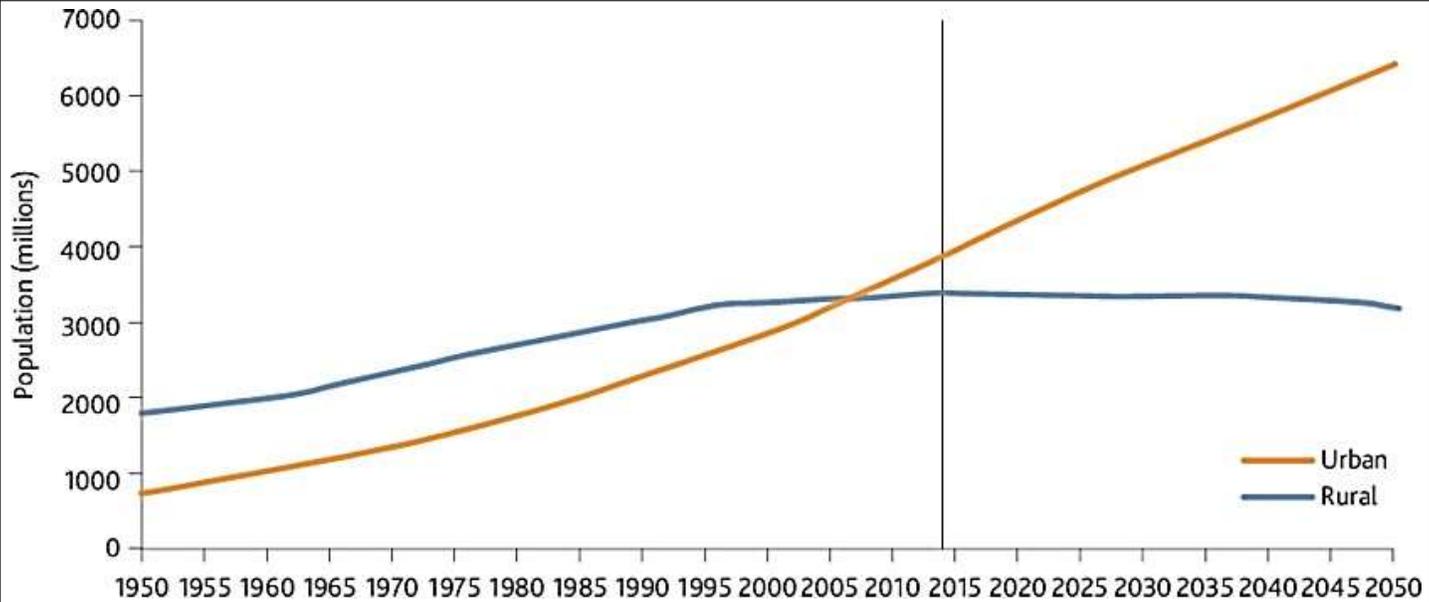
Trends of World Urbanisation

- More than half of the world's population lives in urban areas. Due to the ongoing urbanisation and growth of the world's population, there will be about 2.5 billion more people added to the urban population by 2050, mainly in Africa and Asia. Asian cities are growing very fast. Many are the fastest growing cities are found in the continent.

- In India, interestingly Tier II cities have a faster growing rate. The world's urban areas are highly varied, but many cities and towns are facing problems such as a lack of jobs, homelessness and expanding squatter settlements, inadequate services and infrastructure, poor health and educational services and high levels of pollution.

- In 1960, the global urban population was 34% of the total; however, by 2014 the urban population accounted for 54% of the total and continues to grow. By 2050 the proportion living in urban areas is expected to reach 66% (UNDESA, 2014). Figure 5.1 shows the change in the rural and urban populations of the world from 1950 through to projected figures up to the year 2050.

- The process of urbanisation affects all sizes of settlements, so villages gradually grow to become small towns, smaller towns become larger towns, and large towns become cities. This succession of settlements with growing diversification of economy. has led to the growth of mega-cities. A mega-city is an urban area of greater than ten million people. Rapid expansion of city borders, driven by increases in population and infrastructure development, leads to the expansion of city borders that spread out and
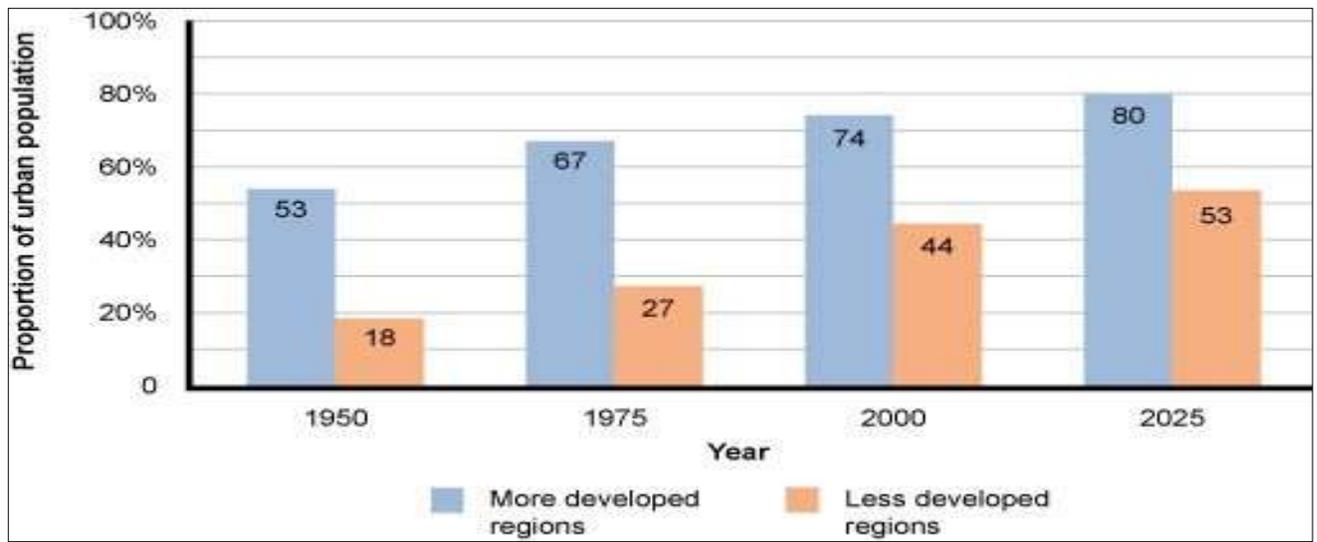
swallow up neighbouring urban areas to form mega-cities. In 1970, there were only three mega-cities across the globe, but by the year 2000, the number had risen to 17 and by 2030, 24 more mega-cities will be added.
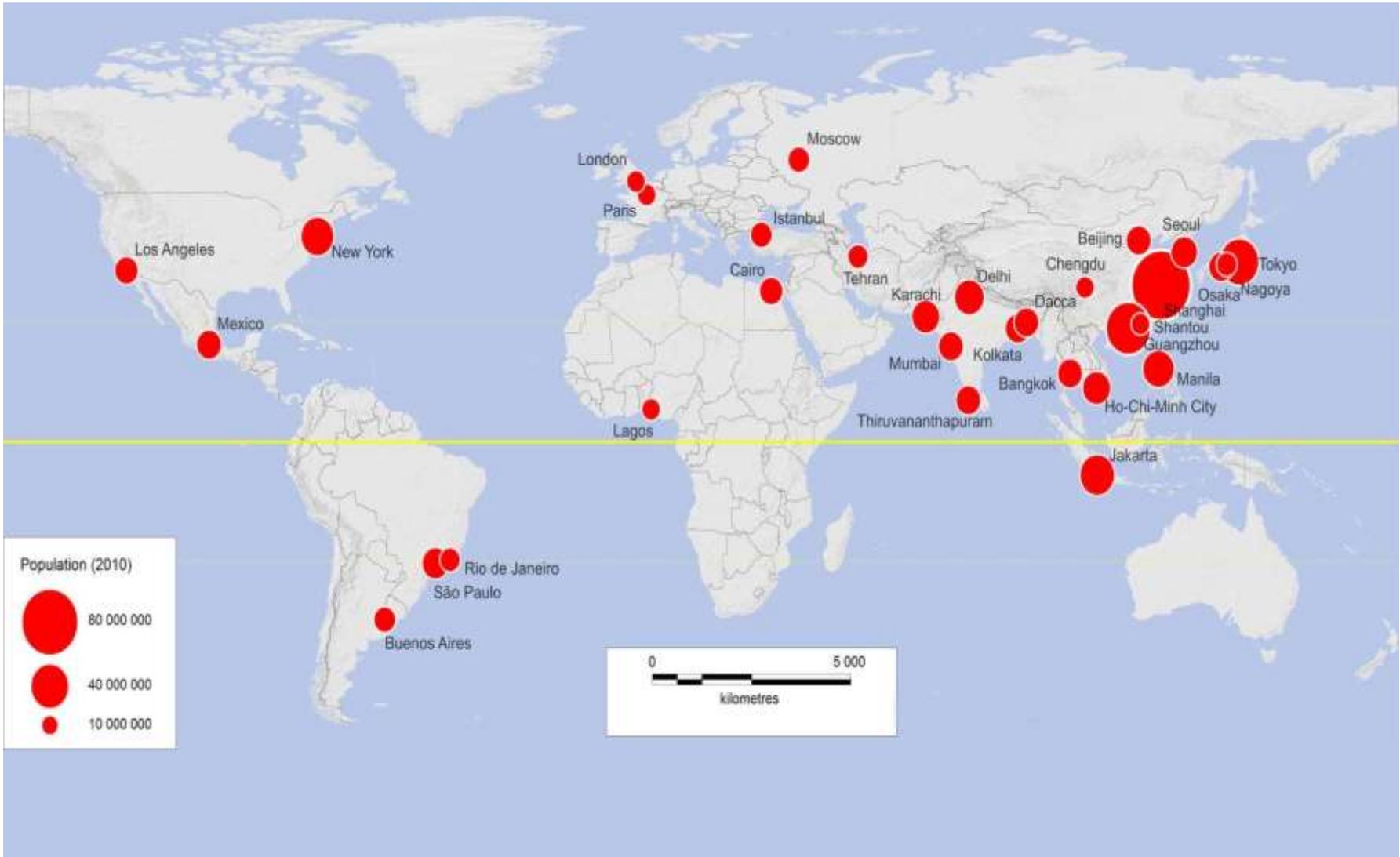
- The global trend in urbanisation is not the same in all parts of the world. Asia and Africa currently have the highest rates of urbanisation. Figure 5.3 shows a comparison of trends in more or less developed regions of the world.

Urban and Rural Population of the World, 1950–2050

Source: UN, 2014

Proportion of urban population

	1950	1975	2000	2025
More developed regions	53	67	74	80
Less developed regions	18	27	44	53

Year

World's Cities with more than 10 million Inhabitants

(2010)

Patterns of World Urbanisation

The world passed a landmark statistic sometime in 2014, when it was estimated that for the first time in human history over 50% of the world's population was living in urban areas. What is happening to where we live, and why? For urbanisation to happen, people need to move into cities rather than be born in them. The end result is a growth in the size of urban spaces, which could also be called 'built environments'. Urban populations grow as a result of:

- **Rural-urban migration (voluntary):** urban **'Pull factors'** predominate as people anticipate an improved quality of life in a city together with enhanced future prospects for themselves and their family.

- **Rural-urban migration (forced)**: rural **'Push factors'** predominate as a result of environmental pressures in rural areas (floods/drought), food shortages and/or political conflict. More directly, government policy of moving rural inhabitants to cities may take any choice away from the migration. China's **bureaucratic relocation** involved in the 'National New-type Urbanisation Plan 2014-2020' foresees moving over 260m people to cities in an attempt to modernise social and economic systems – an easier prospect when people are gathered rather than dispersed.

- **Assimilation**: as urban areas expand they may incorporate nearby smaller towns and villages into expansive conurbations. The term 'urban sprawl' denotes the rapid spatial expansion of an urban area that is likely to surround and incorporate previously separate settlements.

Rapid sub-urbanisation took place as mass-house building occurred in the decade after the Second World War. Rebuilding bomb-damaged cities and providing higher quality housing became a priority for the Labour government after 1945, and continued through successive governments. In order to prevent urban sprawl that had been a feature of the 1930s, much development was focused on the **New Town** programme (Milton Keynes, Telford etc.) and designating **Green Belt** land around major cities to, among other priorities, prevent cities merging into unbroken urban development.

North America, Europe and Oceania underwent their fastest urbanisation rates well before 1945 – in the 19th century. South and Central America urbanised rapidly during the 1960s-80s, while the industrialisation and economic 'take-off' of many Asian countries in the 1980s to the present day (and continuing) has been accompanied by rapid urbanisation. This is likely to continue into the coming decades as economic growth continues and while there are still so many potential urban migrants living in rural areas. The continent that is presently starting to see rapid urbanisation occurring is Africa, with cities such as: Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) due to grow by 85% between 2010-2025; Nairobi (Kenya, 77%); Kinshasa (DRC, 72%) and the continent's largest city – Lagos (Nigeria, 50%).

Emergence of Megacities, World cities and their role in Global and Regional Economies
Megacities

Megacities are defined by their size (over 10m inhabitants) rather than their global significance. It may be one city (metropolitan area) such as Cairo, Egypt or a merging of a number of cities into a continuous built-up area (Tokyo-Yokohama, Japan).

- They have doubled over the past two decades, from 14 in 1995 to 29 in 2016.

- Their development is more likely where rapid economic growth is concentrated in a limited number of locations within a country. Mass rural-urban migration tends to be focused on these core urban areas rather than dispersed between a wider set of optional cities that migrants may select from, with different decisions made.

- Megacities can benefit from more efficient infrastructure, such as mass transport systems and economically with both horizontal and vertical industrial integration. However, urban problems may be magnified in megacities (congestion, waste disposal, air pollution, lack of housing) and prove more problematic to solve.

- Megacities are frequently major global hubs of manufacturing and export (Shenzhen, China and Delhi, India) in which goods are produced efficiently and at low cost and exported to the major world markets. They are also key markets, themselves for basic

raw materials, components and energy resources.

World's Cities

- These are cities that have particular influence on global economic, cultural and political systems. They may be megacities (New York, Tokyo) but aren't necessarily (London, Moscow, Paris, Berlin). They are seen to function as global hubs.

- Key global financial networks are influenced by their concentration of major banks and commercial HQs, stock markets and politico-economic influence and include New York, London and Tokyo. Decisions taken there have global significance.

- World cities may display the full range of key influences, or be distinctive for their dominance in certain ones rather than others (Paris: culture, fashion, art and media).

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