

## **Chapter 10 – Urbanization**

### **Urban Geography and Urbanization**

- Urban centres have been the focus of Canada's economic transformation and have become the places where the great majority of Canadians live
- They have always been a crucial element in spatial organization and the evolution of societies
- Between 1980 and 2000, the number of city dwellers worldwide rose by 1.1 billion
- Cities now account for almost half of the world's population
- Much of the developed world has become almost completely urbanized
- Experts on urbanization point to four fundamental aspects of the role of towns and cities in human economic and social organization:
  - The mobilizing function of each settlement.
    - Cities providing efficient and effective environments for organizing labour, capital and raw materials
  - The decision-making capacity of urban settlement
    - Urban settings bring together the decision-making machinery of public and private institutions and organizations, they become concentrations of political and economic powers
  - The generative functions of urban settlement
    - Concentration of people in urban settings makes for much greater interaction and competition
  - The transformative capacity of urban settlement
    - The size, density and variety of urban populations allow people to escape the rigidities of traditional rural society and to participate in a variety of lifestyles and behaviours
- Urban geographers look at the development of towns and cities around the world, particularly with the similarities and differences both among and within urban places
- Urban geographers also want to know about the causes of the patterns and regularities they find
- Urbanization is not simply a process of the demographic growth of towns and cities
- Involves many other changes, both quantitative and qualitative
- **Urban system** – An interdependent set of urban settlements within a specified region
- As urbanization takes place, the attributes of urban systems will reflect the fact that increasing numbers of people are living in ever-larger towns and cities
- Also reflect other important changes, such as changes in the relative size of cities, in their functional relationships with one another, and in their employment base and population composition
- **Urban Form** – The physical structure and organization of cities
- As urbanization takes place, not only do towns and cities grow bigger physically, extending upward and downward, but they also become reorganized, redeveloped and redesigned in response to changing circumstances
- **Urban Ecology** – The social and demographic composition of city districts and neighbourhoods
- Urbanization not only brings more people to cities, but it also brings a greater variety of people
- **Urbanism** – The way of life, attitudes, values and patterns of behaviour fostered by urban

settings

- Geographers are interested in urbanism because of the ways in which it varies both within and among cities

### **Urban Origins**

- The earliest urbanization developed independently in the various hearth areas of the first agricultural revolution
- First region of independent urbanism was in the Middle East, in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates and in the Nile Valley from around 3500 BC
- By 2500 BC, cities had appeared in the Indus Valley, and by 1800 BC, they were established in Northern China
- Changes in social organization were an important precondition for urbanization
- Urbanization required the emergence of groups that were able to exact tributes, impose taxes, and control labour power, usually through some form of religious persuasion or military coercion
- The elite group would provide the stimulus for urban development by using its wealth to build palaces, arenas, and monuments to show off its power and status
- The urbanized economies of world-empires lapsed into ruralism before being revived or recolonized

### **The Roots of European Urban Expansion**

- The urban system introduced by the Greeks and re-established by the Romans almost collapsed during the Dark Ages of early medieval Europe
- During this period, feudalism gave rise to a fragmented landscape of inflexible and inward-looking world empires
- Feudalism was a rigid, rurally oriented form of economic and social organization based on the communal chiefdoms of Germanic tribes who had invaded the disintegrating Roman Empire
- Early medieval Europe, divided into a patchwork of feudal kingdoms and estates, was mostly rural
- Each feudal state was more or less self-sufficient regarding foodstuffs, and each kingdom or principality was more or less self-sufficient regarding the raw materials needed to craft simple products
- From the eleventh century onward, the feudal system faltered and disintegrated in the face of successive demographic, economic, and political crises, which were caused by steady population growth in conjunction with only modest technological improvements and limited amounts of cultivable land
- Feudal nobility began to levy higher taxes
- A more extensive money economy developed as a result, along with the beginnings of a pattern of trade in basic agricultural produce and craft manufactures
- Regional specializations and trading patterns that emerged provided the foundations for a new phase of urbanization based on merchant capitalism
- By 1400, long distance trading was well established, based not on the luxury goods of the pioneer merchants but on bulky staples, such as grains, wine, salt, wool, cloth and metals

- Between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries....
  - Merchant capitalism increased in scale and sophistication
  - Economic and social reorganization was stimulated by the Protestant Reformation and the scientific revolution
  - Aggressive overseas colonization made Europeans the leaders, persuaders and shapers of the rest of the world's economies and societies
  - Established the basis of a Latin American urban system in just 60 years, between 1520-1580 (Spanish and Portuguese colonists)
  - Colonial towns by Spanish colonists were founded on Native American cities or in regions of dense indigenous populations
  - Colonial towns were established mainly as administrative and military centres from which the Spanish Crown could occupy and exploit the New World
  - Portuguese colonists situated their cities with commercial rather than administrative considerations in mind
  - Renaissance reorganization saw the centralization of political power and the formation of national states, the beginnings of industrialization
  - Gateway cities around the world were being formed
  - **Gateway city** – A city that serves as a link between one country or region and others because of its physical situation
  - A control centre that commands entrance to and exit from its particular country or region
  - European powers founded literally thousands of towns as they extended their trading networks and established their colonies
  - Before long, they developed manufacturing of their own to supply the pioneers' needs, along with more extensive commercial and financial services

### Industrialization and Urbanization

- In 1800, less than 5 percent of the world's 980 million people lived in towns and cities
- By 1950, 16 percent of the world's population was urban, and more than 900 cities with 100,000 or more inhabitants existed around the world
- Industrial Revolution and European imperialism had created unprecedented concentrations of humanity that were intimately linked in networks and hierarchies of interdependence
- Industrial economies could be organized only through the large pools of labour; transportation networks; the physical infrastructure of factories, warehouses, stores, and offices; and the consumer markets provided by cities
- As industrialization spread throughout Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century and then to other parts of the world, urbanization increased at a faster pace
- High wages and greater variety of opportunities in urban labour markets attracted migrants from surrounding areas
- The demographic transition caused a rapid growth in population as death rates dropped dramatically
- Growth in population provided a massive increase in the labour supply throughout the nineteenth century, further boosting the rate of urbanization, not only within Europe but also in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the US

- **Shock City** – A city that is seen as the embodiment of surprising and disturbing changes in economic, social and cultural lives
- Gateway cities were founded and as Europeans raced to establish economic and political control over continental interiors, colonial cities were established as centres of administration, political control and commerce
- **Colonial cities** – cities that were deliberately established or developed as administrative or commercial centres by colonial or imperial powers
- Two distinct types of colonial city
  - The pure colonial city was usually established, or “planted” by colonial administrations in a location where no significant urban settlement had previously existed.
    - Laid out expressly to fulfill colonial functions, such as trading, government, etc
  - Colonial functions were grafted onto an existing settlement, taking advantage of a good site and a ready supply of labour
    - Examples: Mexico City, Shanghai, Tunis
    - Colonial imprint is most visible in and around the city centre in the formal squares and public spaces, layout of avenues, presence of colonial architecture

### **World Urbanization Today**

- The United Nations has suggested that almost half of the world's population is now urban
- Data incorporates the different definitions of urban used by different countries
- Some countries count any settlement of 1000 people or more as urban
- In comparison, countries such as Japan consider a settlement of 50000 people or more as urban
- North America is the most urbanized continent in the world, with more than 80 percent of its population living in urban areas
- Africa and Asia are less than 40 percent urban
- Only 29.7 percent of the world's population was urbanized in 1950, using the same definitions of urban settlements
- Population projections for 2010 suggest that more than 52 percent of the world's population will be living in urban areas, and there will be around 475 cities with a population of a million or more

### **Regional Trends and Projections**

- In 1950, two thirds of the world's urban population was concentrated in the more developed countries of the core economies
- Since then, the world's population has increased three-fold, the bulk of the growth having taken place in the less-developed countries of the periphery
- By 2010, all but 2 of the 10 largest metropolitan areas are expected to be located in peripheral and semiperipheral regions
- Asia, based around mainly a region of villages, has steadily grown to incorporate thousands of cities and towns
- Between 1950 and 1985, its urban population rose nearly fourfold to 480 million people
- By 2020, about two thirds of Asia's population will be living in urban areas

- The communist government in China has restricted where people can live, tying people to certain villages and towns and refusing to allow them to move into cities
- By 1985, more than 70 percent of China's 1 billion people still lived in the countryside in 1985
- Between 1981 and 2003, the number of people living in cities in China more than tripled, from 162 million to 504 million, and the number of cities with a population of half a million or more increased from 16 to 97
  - This was all part to the government accepting economic growth from the formation of new cities and towns
- In the world's core countries, levels of urbanization are high and have been so for some time
- Core countries are more than 75 percent urbanized, and the populations of Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK are more than 90 percent urbanized
- Semiperipheral countries all see high urbanization rates, with 75% or greater
- In peripheral countries, they are experiencing rates of growth at unprecedented speed and unmatched size
- Major cities in peripheral countries are expected to have population projections in excess of 17 million by 2015
- Reasons for urban growth range from civil conflicts pushing people into the capital, environmental changes and demographic transitions
- Many of the largest cities in the periphery are growing at annual rates of between 4 percent and 7 percent; at the higher rate the population will double in 10 years, while at the lower rate, it will double in 17 years
- Doubling time of a city's population is the time needed for it to double in size at current growth rates
- Metropolitan areas such as Mexico City and Sao Paulo are adding half a million people to their population each year

### Urban Systems

- **Central Places**
  - **Central Places** – Settlements in which certain products and services are available to consumers
  - Walter Christaller gave rise to the ideas that subsequently were to become part of the locational analysis tradition of geography, when these ideas became “rediscovered” by geographers in the late 1950s and 1960s
  - Christaller's work on the location of towns and cities offered an explanation for urban geographers that could be expressed in the almost geometric, abstract language of locational analysis
  - **Central Place Theory** – A theory that seeks to explain the relative size and spacing of towns and cities as a function of people's shopping behaviours
  - Christaller had noticed that southern Germany had quite a number of smaller places, each offering a limited assortment of stores, services, and amenities for its residents and the residents of nearby areas
  - Large towns and cities, were fewer and farther between but offered a much greater variety of stores, services and amenities, many of them catering to customers and clients from

quite distant towns and intermediate rural areas

- **Range** – The maximum distance that consumers will normally travel to obtain a particular product or service
- “High-order” goods and services are those that are relatively costly and generally required infrequently
  - They usually have the greatest range, usually 100+ kms
- **Threshold** – The minimum market size required to make the sale of a particular product or service profitable
- High-order services, such as hospitals, have thresholds in the tens of thousands of people
- A need will exist for only a limited number of large central places in which all the higher-order goods and services are provided
- Logical that these communities will also provide the entire spectrum of central place functions
- Christaller was able to demonstrate that under ideal circumstances, towns and cities tend to be arranged in clear hierarchies, with hexagonal-shaped market areas of different sizes arranged around different-sized areas.
- Most urban systems of most regions do exhibit a clear hierarchical structure
- Partly a legacy of past eras, when towns and cities did function mainly as market centres for surrounding agricultural areas
- Urban systems also exhibit clear functional differences within such hierarchies such as the geographical division of labour within cities themselves
- Medium and larger sized cities perform quite specialized economic functions and so acquire quite distinctive characters
- Urban hierarchies divide up cities based on their national or regional significance
  - For example, Montreal/Toronto/Vancouver would be cities of National significance
  - Halifax/Quebec City/Ottawa/London/Winnipeg/Calgary/Edmonton are cities with regional importance
  - Smaller cities would be urban areas of subregional importance
  - Small towns would be considered local centres, providing basic services
- The Canadian urban system consists of only approximately 750 communities, ranging in size from small resource town to metropolitan centres
- **City-Size Distributions, Primacy and Centrality**
  - **Rank-Size Rule** – A statistical regularity in city-size distributions of countries and regions
  - Relationship is such that the  $n$ th largest city in a country or region is  $1/n$  the size of the largest city in that country or region
  - This relationship with a logarithmic scale for population sizes would produce a perfectly straight line
  - Over time, the slope has moved to the right on the graph, reflecting the growth of towns and cities at every level in the urban hierarchy
  - Top of the rank-size distribution is distorted as a result of the disproportionate size of the largest city
  - **Primacy** – A condition in which the population of the largest city in an urban system is

disproportionately large in relation to the second and third largest cities in that system

- Such cities are called primate cities
- Some of the largest metropolitan areas in the world are not primate
- Primacy in peripheral countries is usually a consequence of primate cities' early roles as gateway cities
- It is usually a consequence of primate cities' roles as imperial capitals and centres of administration, politics and trade for a much wider urban system than their own domestic system
- **Centrality** – The functional dominance of cities within an urban system
- Cities that account for a disproportionately high share of economic, political, and cultural activities have a high degree of centrality within their urban system
- Very often, primate cities exhibit this characteristic, but cities do not necessarily have to be primate to be functionally dominant within their urban system
- **World Cities**
  - Certain cities known as world cities have played key roles in organizing space beyond their own national boundaries
  - In the first stages of world system growth, these key roles involved the organization of trade and the execution of colonial, imperial and geopolitical strategies
  - With the globalization of the economy, the key roles of world cities are concerned less with the deployment of imperial power and the orchestration of trade and more with transnational corporate organization, international banking and finance, supranational government and the work of international agencies
  - Cities have become the control centres for the flows of information, cultural products and finance that collectively sustain the economic and cultural globalization of the world.
  - World cities also provide an interface between the global and the local
  - They contain the economic, cultural, and institutional apparatuses that channel national and provincial/territorial resources into the global economy
  - World cities possess several characteristics
    - They are the sites of most of the leading global markets for commodities, commodity futures, investment capital, foreign exchange, equities, and bonds
    - They are the sites of clusters of specialized, high-order business services, especially those that are international in scope and attached to finance, accounting, advertising, property development and law
    - They are the sites of concentrations of corporate headquarters – not just of transnational corporations but also of major national firms and large foreign firms
    - They are the sites of concentrations of national and international headquarters of trade and professional associations
    - They are the sites of most of the leading non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations that are international in scope
    - They are the sites of the most powerful and internationally influential media organization
  - Interdependencies represent a special case of the geographical agglomeration effects
  - Agglomeration is the clustering of functionally related activities

- At the same time, different world cities fulfill different roles within the world-system, making for different emphases and combinations as well as for differences in the absolute and relative localization of particular world-city functions
- **Megacities**
  - **Megacities** – Very large cities characterized by high centrality within their national economy
  - Most common feature is their sheer size – most of them number 10 million or more in population
  - Together with their functional centrality, means that in many ways they have more in common with one another than with the smaller metropolitan areas and cities within their own countries
  - Examples: Beijing, Cairo, Lagos, Manila, Mexico City, Shanghai, and Tehran
  - Each one of these cities has more inhabitants than 100 of the member countries of the UN
  - They link local and provincial economies with the global economy but also provide a point of contact between the traditional and the modern, and between formal and informal economic sectors
  - **Informal sector** – Economic activities that take place beyond official record and are not subject to formalized systems of regulation or remuneration

### Urban Growth Processes

#### Urbanization and Economic Development

- **Economic Base** – Set of manufacturing, processing, trading, or service activities that serve markets beyond the city
  - Includes economic functions that involve the manufacturing, processing, or trading of goods or the provision of services for markets beyond the city itself
- **Basic Functions** – Economic activities that provide income from sales to customers beyond city limits
- **Nonbasic Functions** – Economic activities that service a city's own population
- Fundamental determinant of cities' growth in population, employment, and income in the world's core countries is the percentage of their economies that is devoted to basic activities
- Prosperity generated by basic economic activities leads to increased employment in nonbasic activities to satisfy the demand for housing, utilities, retailing, personal services, and other services
- Incomes generated by the combination of basic and nonbasic economic activities allow for higher potential tax yields, which can be used to improve a city's infrastructure
- **Metropolitanism** – The process by which the economic growth of a city enables it to attain a position of national dominance and, in so doing, creates the geographical structure of a metropolis and hinterland.
- The cities that have been able to dominate the Canadian urban hierarchy have done so because of their ability to control the economy of the heartland
- These centres of the periphery may never be able to develop beyond their initial function as resource centres designed to exploit the staples of this country's hinterland
- Economic investment that they would need to do this is channelled to the metropolitan



centres of the heartland instead

### **Deindustrialization and Decentralization**

- Logic of economic development does not always work uniformly in the direction of population concentration and urban growth
- Forces of cumulative causation are refocused from time to time as new technologies, new resources and new opportunities alter the balance of comparative advantages enjoyed by particular places within the world's core and semiperipheral countries
- New rounds of urbanization are initiated in the places most suited to the new circumstances, while those least suited are likely to suffer a spiral of deindustrialization and urban decline
- Deindustrialization involves a decline in industrial employment in core regions as firms scale back their activities in response to lower levels of productivity.
- Cities such as Pittsburgh and Cleveland are dependent on manufacturing as a key economic sector
- As better and flexible transport/communication networks were introduced in the 1970s and 1980s has allowed many industries to choose from a broader range of potential locations
- Result has been a decentralization of jobs and people from larger to smaller cities within the urban systems of core countries
- In some cases, routine production activities relocated to smaller metropolitan areas or to rural areas with low labour costs and more hospitable business climates
- Trends toward deindustrialization and decentralization have been intensified by the dampening effects of agglomeration diseconomies
- Negative effects of urban size and density, agglomeration diseconomies include noise, air pollution, increased crime, commuting costs, the costs of inflated land and housing prices, traffic congestion, and crowded port and railroad facilities
- Include higher taxes levied to rebuild decaying infrastructure and support services

### **Counterurbanization**

- **Counterurbanization** – The net loss of population from cities to smaller towns and rural areas
- Process results in the deconcentration of population within an urban system
- Occurred in Canada, the US, Britain, Japan and many other developed countries in the 1970s
- Metropolitan growth slowed dramatically, while the growth rates of small and medium sized towns and of some rural areas increased
- Urban growth also shifted from the industrial heartland of southern Ontario and Quebec to the western provinces
- Effect of counterurbanization was for population to be redistributed down the urban hierarchy
- Counterurbanization was a major reversal of long-standing trends, but it seems to have been a temporary adjustment rather than a permanent change
- Globalization of the economy and growth of postindustrial activities in revamped and expanded metropolitan settings have restored the trend toward the concentration of population within urban systems

### The Unintended Metropolis

- Urban growth processes in the world's peripheral regions have been entirely different from those in core regions
- Urbanization of peripheral regions has been a consequence of demographic growth that has preceded economic development
- Demographic transition is a fairly recent phenomenon in the peripheral regions of the world, it generated large increases in population well in advance of any significant levels of industrialization or of rural economic development
- Problems of agricultural development meant that fast-growing rural populations faced an apparently hopeless future of drudgery and poverty
- Emigration helped to control this, but as the frontiers of the world-system closed out, the more affluent core countries put up barriers to immigration.
- Only option for the growing numbers of impoverished rural residents was to move to the larger towns and cities, where at least there is the hope of enjoyment and prospect of access to schools, health clinics, piped water and services/facilities that were unavailable in rural regions.
- Cities also have the lure of modernization and the appeal of consumer goods – attractions that are now directly beamed into rural areas through satellite TV
- Rural migrants have poured into cities out of desperation and hope, rather than being drawn by jobs and opportunities
- An important additional component of urban growth has followed – exceptionally high rates of natural population increase
- The rate of natural increase of the population in cities exceeds that of net in-migration
- About 60% of urban population growth in peripheral countries is attributable to natural increase
- **Overurbanization** – A condition in which cities grow more rapidly than the jobs and housing they can sustain
- Urban growth produces instant slums – shacks set on unpaved streets, often with open sewers and no basic utilities
- **Squatter Settlements** – Residential developments on land that is neither owned nor rented by its occupants
- It is the slums and squatter settlements that have to absorb the unprecedented rates of urbanization in the megacities of the periphery

### Frontier Urbanization

- Urban growth in the periphery is not all channelled into megacities and older urban centres
- Urbanization can be a consequence of the commercial exploitation of regions that are only just becoming incorporated, selectively
- The population growth of frontier towns is fuelled mainly by poor migrants
- Drawn to frontier towns and cities by the prospects of economic opportunities, they number so many that up to one-third or one-half wind up having to survive through informal-sector activities
- The Amazon Rain Forest has been urbanized over the years, to be used to exploit the resources

of gold, hardwood, rubber and land

- Population of northern Brazil has increased from fewer than 2 million to nearly 10 million
- Main function had always been to provide raw materials and new markets for national, and sometimes global, economic expansion
- The urban population of the region has increased from just over 30 percent of the total population to just under 60 percent
- Frontier urbanization is characterized by the same problems of shanty and squatter housing as elsewhere in the periphery
- Frontier urbanization is also characterized by acute but widespread problems of disease