Global Urbanization

Europe's rapid industrialization was the beginning of a worldwide process set into motion by the globalizing forces of colonialism and the power of the Industrial Revolution, exported and diffused to the farthest corners of the planet. Today, Western Europe is about 80 percent urban, one of the highest on the globe. Nonetheless, many agencies estimate that global urbanization is still below 50 percent.

Cities grew by agglomeration during and after the Industrial Revolution. The industrial cites also went through a phase of specialization, and many became known for their products; Manchester textiles, Sheffield silver, and Birmingham steel were a few British examples. Such cities and towns proved vulnerable to changing economic conditions. This stage of specialization passed, however, and most cites are much more diversified today – indeed, the more diversification the better.

One trend occurring in the industrialized core is the development of urban **conurbations**; large, multi-metropolitan complexes formed by the merging of two or more major urban areas. Bosnywash, the Boston-New York-Washington D.C. megalopolis is an outstanding example. A trend that is occurring more frequently in the developing world is the rise of **megacities**; vast metropolitan areas. Paris, with a population over 10 million, is a classic example. However, the fastest growing megacities are in the periphery.
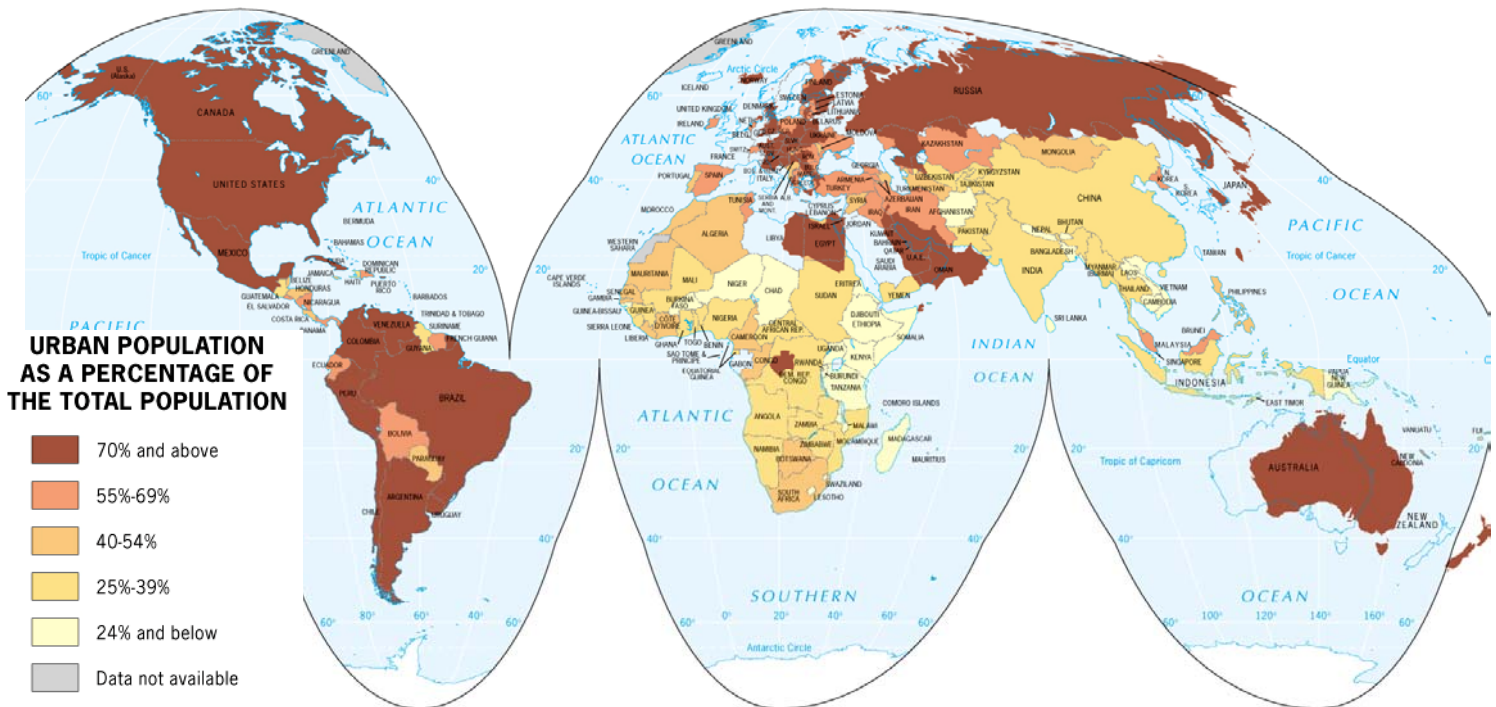
World Urbanization

One way to examine the world urbanization is to view the urban population of a state as a percentage of its total population. A state or region may not contain any of the world's largest cities (e.g., many Western & Northern

Region (2005)	% Urban
Northern Europe	82
Western Europe	79
North America	79
South America	79
Southern Europe	74
Oceania	72
Middle America	68
Eastern Europe	68
Southwest Asia	63
Caribbean	62
South Africa	50
North Africa	46
East Asia	46
Southeast Asia	38
West Africa	36
Middle Africa	35
Sub-Saharan Africa	31
South Asia	30
East Africa	22

European states), but it may be more highly urbanized than states or regions with megacities. Germany, for example, is 86 percent urbanized, yet India is only 28 percent urbanized. An observation of the map below will reveal several realities of current trends.

Middle America is certainly relatively less urbanized as compared with North America. Only the landlocked countries in South America (Paraguay and Bolivia) lagged behind its neighbors (e.g., South American "cone" – Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay). Northern and Western Europe exhibit some of the highest levels of urbanization in the world. Southern and Eastern Europe are generally less urbanized, but still high for the world average (around 50 percent). Seventy years of communist rule and industrialization raised levels of urbanization throughout most of the former Soviet Union. The culturally and economically diverse realm of Southwest Asia and North Africa displays remarkable variation. **Nucleation** (agglomeration) resulting from the oil industry has much to do with some of the high levels of urbanization. The Sub-Saharan African realm includes some of the world's lowest levels of urbanization. Urbanization in much of Central and South Asia remains

URBAN POPULATION AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION

- 70% and above
- 55%-69%
- 40-54%
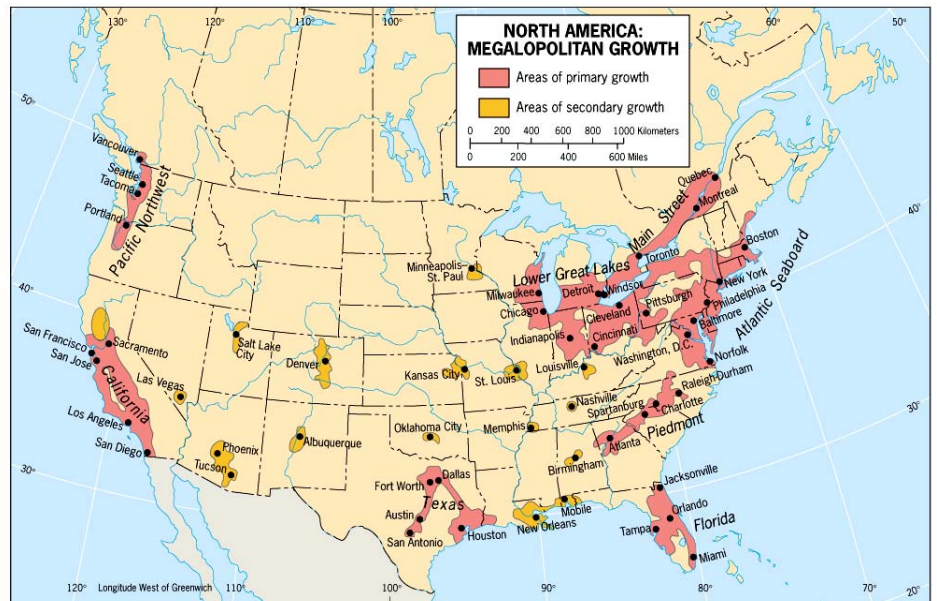- 25%-39%
- 24% and below
- Data not available

low. Southeast Asia includes the only country that is 100 percent urban: the city-state of Singapore. Overall, however, this realm is marked by low levels of urbanization. For example, Indonesia, the fourth most populous country, is only 42 percent urbanized. With the exception of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, East Asia has relatively low levels of urbanization. In Oceania, Australia and New Zealand exhibit the highest levels of urbanization at over 85 percent.
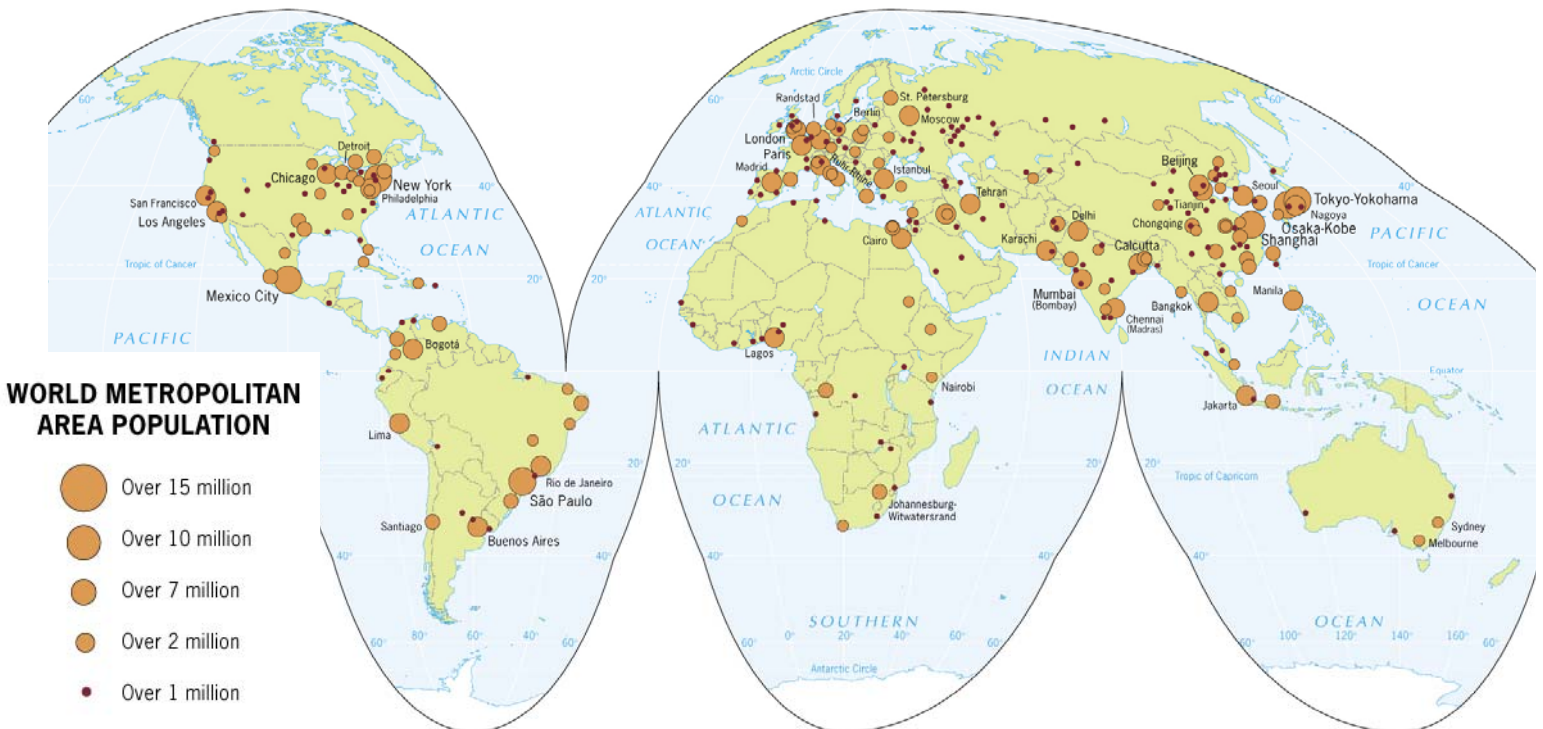

Megalopolises and Megacities

The map below shows the distribution of the more than 300 cities with populations over 1 million. North America displays the anchors of several megalopolitan regions (see the map to the right). The largest ones include **Bosnywash**, Chicago-Detroit-Pittsburgh, and San Francisco-Los Angeles-San Diego. Yet another, in Florida, centered on Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, is growing northward toward Jacksonville. In England, a major megalopolitan region is developing around London. A major urban complex is emerging in western Germany in the Ruhr-Rhine zone. The Netherlands is attempting to make **Randstad** (edge or "ring city": Amsterdam-Rotterdam-The Hague) into a modern megalopolis.

Many of the world's evolving megacities are located in the less prosperous parts of the world. People continue to migrate to cities in response to "pull" factors (e.g., jobs, better life,…) that are often more imaginary than real. During the 1990s, Africa had the world's fastest growing cities, followed by South Asia, mainland East Asia and South and Middle America. Cities in the periphery generally lack enforceable **zoning** laws, which are drawn up to ensure that space is used in ways that the society deems to be culturally and environmentally acceptable. For example, immediately around the CBD of Cairo, you would see what appears to be a modern metropolis. But as you travel toward the outskirts of the city, that impression fades rapidly as paved streets give way to dusty alleys, apartment buildings to harsh tenements, sidewalk shops to broken doors and windows. The city is bursting at the seams (more than 12 million people today), and still people continue to arrive, seeking the better life that pulls countless migrants from the countryside year after year.

WORLD METROPOLITAN AREA POPULATION

- Over 15 million
- Over 10 million
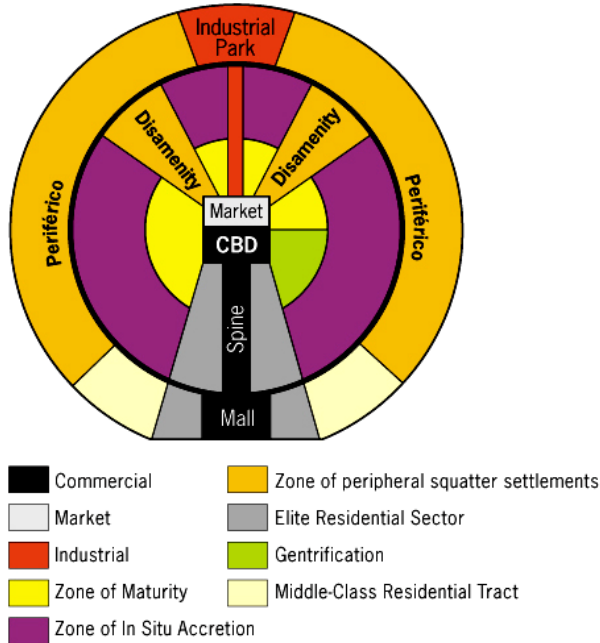- Over 7 million
- Over 2 million
- Over 1 million

Modeling the Ibero-American City

As urbanization has increased, it has become increasingly difficult to model, classify, or typify urban centers. In South and Middle America, cities are growing fastest in those countries where Iberian (Latin) cultures dominate. The basic spatial framework combines radial sectors and concentric zones.

A NEW AND IMPROVED MODEL OF LATIN AMERICAN CITY STRUCTURE

Legend:
- Commercial (black)
- Market (light gray)
- Industrial (red)
- Zone of Maturity (yellow)
- Zone of In Situ Accretion (purple)
- Zone of peripheral squatter settlements (orange)
- Elite Residential Sector (gray)
- Gentrification (green)
- Middle-Class Residential Tract (cream)

Anchoring the model is the thriving CBD, divided into a traditional market sector and a more modern high-rise sector. Nearby affluent residential areas and good public transit

CBD of La Paz, Bolivia

assure the dominance

of the CBD. The *commercial spine* emanates between the *elite residential sector*. This widening corridor is essentially an extension of the CBD. It features offices,

Zona Sur – edge city of La Paz

shopping centers, high-quality houses, and other attractive amenities (e.g., zoos, parks,…). An edge city (suburban node) shown as *"mall"* on the model is flanked by high-priced residences. Socioeconomic levels and housing
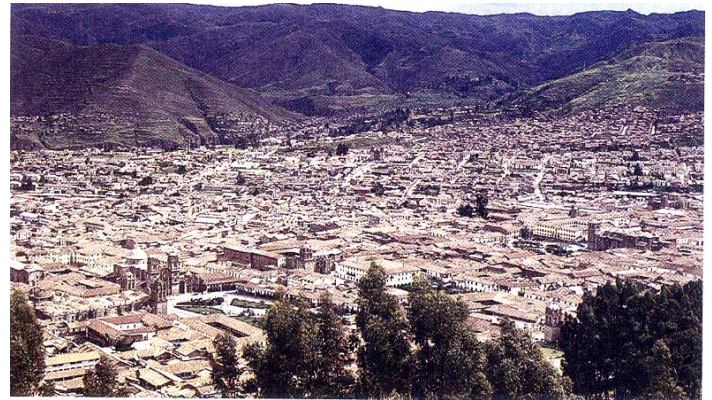
quality decrease with greater distance from the CBD. The *zone of maturity* in the inner city has the best housing outside the spine, attracting the middle classes. The adjacent zone of *in situ accretion* ("self-built" homes) is one of much more modest housing. The residential density of this zone is quite high. The outermost *zone of peripheral squatter settlements*

In Situ Accretion – La Paz

(*periferico*) is home to the impoverished and unskilled, teeming with high-density shantytowns. Many Latin American cities have *disamenity sectors*, which contain slums known as *barrios* or *favelas*. Some are so poor they live in the streets. Drug lords often run the show – or battle with other drug lords. Finally, the *industrial park* reflects the ongoing concentration of industrial activity, and a *gentrification* zone is where historic buildings are preserved. Although this model gives a general picture, in truth these cities display so much diversity that no simple model can represent all of their aspects.
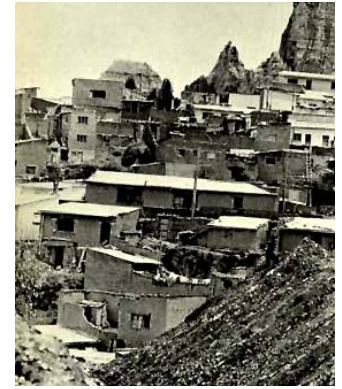
One thing is for certain, however; many these cities are growing rapidly, and most of the new arrivals can only find room to live on the outskirts of the city. Many of these new "homes" are built in potentially dangerous areas (e.g., hillsides prone to mudslides). One other

Lima's Plaza de San Martin, Peru

commonality with most Middle & South American cities, is the presence of great plazas, often named after revolutionary heroes, and flanked by cathedrals and churches as well as public buildings.

The Southeast Asian City

When we think of urbanization in Southeast Asia, we tend to think of Singapore as the prime example. Other cities, like Kuala Lumpur (the capital of Malaysia), are modernizing with a great deal of high-rise development. A generalized model is depicted below, with the old colonial port zone as the city's focus (obviously along the water). Although there is no formal CBD, its elements are present as separate clusters; within the belt beyond the port: the *government zone* (containing the seat of
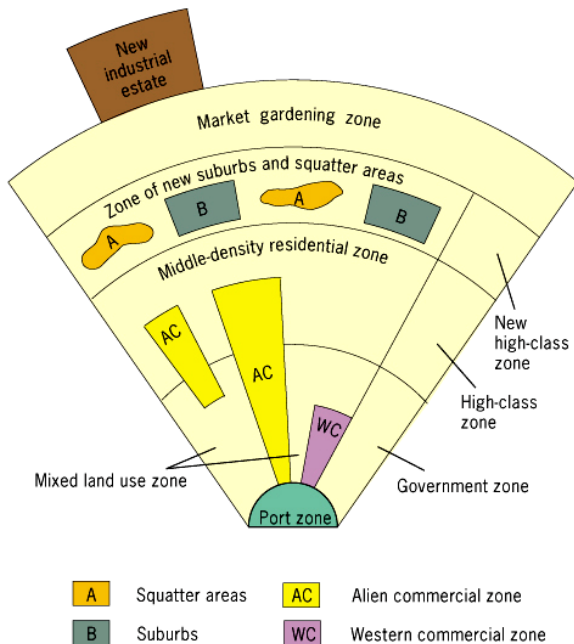

A GENERALIZED MODEL OF LAND USE AREAS IN THE LARGE SOUTHEAST ASIAN CITY

A	Squatter areas	**AC** Alien commercial zone
B	Suburbs	**WC** Western commercial zone

government), the *Western commercial zone* (displaying the imprint of a colonial past), the *alien commercial zone* (usually dominated by Chinese merchants whose residences are attached to their places of business), and the *mixed land-use zone* (containing miscellaneous economic

activities like light industry). The other non-residential areas are the *market gardening zone* along the periphery, and farther still, a recently built *industrial park*, or "estate." Among the similarities between the Southeast Asian model and the Ibero-American model are the **hybrid** structure of sectors and zones, an elite residential sector (that includes new suburbs), an inner city zone of middle income housing, and peripheral low-income squatter settlements. Note that the housing quality deteriorates away from the core of the city; contrasting the general model of American cities (e.g., concentric zone model).

The African City

Lagos, Nigeria

Sub-Saharn Africa is both the least urbanized and the most rapidly urbanizing realm in the world. At present, only Lagos, Nigeria, is emerging as a world-class megacity (partly due to their rich oil reserves). As in Southeast Asia, the imprint of colonialism can be seen in many African cities. The traditional city in Africa occurs mainly in the Muslim zone in the west. South Africa's major urban centers (Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban) are essentially Western, with elements of European as well as American models, including high rise CBDs and sprawling suburbs. Although difficult to formulate, many African examples contain a central city consisting of not one, but three CBDs: a remnant of the *colonial CBD*, an informal and sometimes periodic *market zone*, and a *traditional CBD* where commerce is conducted from curbside, stalls, or storefronts. Vertical development occurs mostly in the former colonial CBD; the traditional business center is usually a zone of single-story buildings; and the market zone tends to be open-air and informal. Sector development marks the encircling zone of ethnic and mixed neighborhoods; *manufacturing or mining* operations are found next to some parts of this zone. Finally, many African cities are ringed by *satellite townships*, which are essentially squatter settlements.

A MODEL SUBSAHARAN AFRICAN CITY

Colonial CBD	Traditional CBD	Market Zone