

UNIT SIX: CITIES AND URBAN LAND USE

ORIGIN & INFLUENCES OF URBANIZATION

Urbanization is the process by which towns and cities develop. Urbanization is an on-going process that continues even after a city has developed.

Historically, the concept of urbanization first arose from the **Fertile Crescent** in modern-day Southwest Asia/Middle East. It was here that a surplus of agriculture made it possible for humans to stay in one place and create urban centers.

As the concept of urbanization spread across the globe over time, the processes that initiate and drive it changed as well. A location's site can influence the origin, function, and growth of cities. **Site** refers to the unique human and physical characteristics of a place. For example, historically, the single most important factor in a city's location was proximity to water. Water can provide humans with irrigation for crops, food products, and a method for transporting goods and people. Both historically and today, most of the world's population lives near coastal areas or along rivers. **A location's situation has also influenced the origin, function, and growth of cities.** For example, urban areas near NASA in Houston, Texas have grown in number as more people involved in aerospace and engineering fields move, live, and raise families there. Consequently, many of these cities serve a vital role in NASA-related activities. In other words, the growth and function of these cities are largely influenced by their proximity to NASA.



Another factor that influenced the size and distribution of cities were changes in transportation and communication. For example, as people and ideas could travel farther distances over shorter time periods, cities began to cover larger land areas and be spaced farther apart. Architectural improvements, such as high-rise buildings and skyscrapers, have also influenced the location and land-use of urban areas. Generally, the inner core of cities has high-density housing, while the periphery of cities has low-density housing.



Physical geography and resources have long impacted the location and growth of urban areas as human attitudes and values are reflected in the built landscapes of urban areas.

CITIES AND URBAN LAND-USE

With improvements in transportation and technology, urban areas face unique economic, social, political, and environmental changes and challenges.

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CITIES & GLOBALIZATION

Two distinct urban concepts related to the population size of a city are megacities and metacities. A **megacity** is a city whose population is between 10–20 million people, and a **metacity** is a city with a population greater than 20 million. Based on 2018 data from the United Nations, the world has 33 urban populations greater than 10 million, with 27 located in the developing world.

China was home to 6, while India had 5. Additionally, 9 of the 10 cities projected to have populations over 10 million in the future will be in developing countries. **Cities can be categorized into a hierarchy based upon their role in the global distribution of goods and ideas.** For example, the most important world cities, the ones at the top of the world's urban hierarchy, are London, New York, and Tokyo.

Many residents of the developed world are moving away from urban cores to the suburbs—a process known as **suburbanization**. As urban centers lose population, it is referred to as **decentralization**. In other words, people are migrating away from the urban center toward the city periphery. As urban and suburban development increases, it can lead to sprawl. **Sprawl** refers to the continuous and unrestricted build-up of urban and suburban areas across expansive tracts of land. As suburbanization, decentralization, and sprawl increase, it can lead to new forms of urban land use such as edge cities, exurbs, and boomburbs.

LIST OF WORLD'S METACITIES		
Rank	City	2018 UN Population est.
1	Tokyo, Japan	37 million
2	Delhi, India	28 million
3	Shanghai, China	25 million
4	Sao Paulo, Brazil	21.6 million
5	Mexico City, Mexico	21.5 million
6	Cairo, Egypt	20 million

GLOBAL MODELS & THEORIES

Since cities first started appearing many thousands of years ago, their design and internal structure have undergone monumental changes. Today, no two cities are spatially organized the same—some cities have very distinct and noticeable patterns of land use. When comparing and studying the **spatial organization** and **internal structure of cities** around the world, geographers rely on various models. The major models and theories used by geographers to explain the spatial organization and internal structure of cities can be found in the table below.

MODEL NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Burgess concentric zone model	City growth occurs in a series of rings outward from the CBD
Hoyt sector model	City growth occurs in a series of sectors outward from the CBD
Harris & Ullman multiple-nuclei model	City growth occurs around important nodes, which could lead to a city having more than one CBD or other node of importance
Galactic city model	City growth created important nodes in the periphery of cities all linked by a roadway such as a beltway"
Bid-rent theory	Idea that land value decrease as distance from the CBD increases

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Latin America city model	Displays characteristics of the typical Latin America city
Southeast Asia city model	Displays characteristics of the typical Southeast Asian city and the role of colonialism/imperialism
Africa city model	Displays characteristics of the typical African city and the role of colonialism/imperialism
Rank-size rule	Inside a country, the nth largest settlement = $1/n$ the pop. of the largest city (4th largest city = $\frac{1}{4}$ pop. of largest city)
Primary city rule	Inside a country, the largest city is more than double the pop. of the next largest city
Gravity model	Interactions between cities is based on population size and distance
Christallers central place theory	Theory that uses hexagons to explain the number, size, distribution, and hinterlands (market areas) of cities and settlements

URBAN CHALLENGES

Urban areas face an array of unique economic, social, political, and environmental challenges. As urban populations move within a city, certain economic and social issues arise, such as **housing discrimination** and redlining. **Redlining** is a process by which banks designate areas in which they will not lend money for people to buy or improve properties. Other social and economic problems include **blockbusting, crime, access to services, and housing affordability**. Environmental challenges may include environmental injustices/ increased levels of pollution, as well as the growth of **disamenity zones** or **zones of abandonment**.



Responses to these challenges can come in the form of laws. However, due to the fragmentation of governments (state, county, and city), challenges in addressing these issues may also arise. Additional responses to urban change and challenges include **gentrification** and **urban renewal**.

NOTES

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