

Urban Patterns

A large city is stimulating an agitating, entertaining and frightening, welcoming and cold. A city has something for everyone, but a lot of those things are for people who are different from you. Urban geography helps to sort out the complexities of familiar and unfamiliar patterns in urban areas.

Key Issue #1 Where Have Urban Areas Grown?

What makes a city and countryside different **places**? Geographers look at WHERE at TWO scales.

1. the Global distribution of urban settlements
2. the distribution of people and activities within urban spaces

1800s – 3% of pop lived in cities, only London was more than 1 million people

2000 – nearly 50% live in cities with nearly 400 cities have at least 1 million

Urbanization – process by which the population of cities grow – 2 dimensions

1. increase in the number of people living in cities
2. an increase in the percentage of people living in cities

Very soon the number of people in Urban areas will exceed that of Rural settlements for the first time in human history.

MDC – about 3/4 of the people live in urban areas

LDC – about 2/5 “ - exception – Latin America

% in MDC higher because people migrated to cities for work in factories – largely ended

SIX of 10 most populous cities are in LDCs. – traditionally urban growth resulted from diffusion of the Industrial Revolution. The rapid growth of cities in the LDCs is a reversal of the historical trend – NOT a measure of an improved level of development

Social Differences between Urban and Rural Settlement - WIRTH

1. Large size – (rural – know or related to most) – urban- know only few- mostly through specific channels
2. High density - people compete for survival in limited space – stronger groups dominate
3. Social Heterogeneity – greater freedom in urban areas to pursue unusual profession, sexual orientation, or cultural interest. May also feel isolated

*may apply to LDC but distinctions blurred between urban and rural residents in MDC

Physical Definition – legal boundary, as continuously built up area, and as a functioning area

1. legal – **city** – legally incorporated into an independent, self governing unit (in US city with suburbs sometimes called a **central city**)
2. urbanized area – central city plus its contiguous built up suburbs w/ population density exceeds 1,000 per sq mi.

Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)

1. A central city with a population of at least 50,000

2. The county within which the city is located
3. Adjacent counties with a high population density and a large percentage of residents working in the central city.

MSAs – widely used -stats for counties available – problem – some areas not urban – MSAs make up 20% of total US land area compared to 2 % of urbanized areas
Urbanized area typically occupies 10% of MSA land area but 90% of its population

Micropolitan Statistical Area (10 % of Americans live in Micropolitan Stat Area)

1. urbanized area between 10,000 & 50,000 people
2. county where found
3. adjacent counties tied to the city

Overlapping Metropolitan Areas

Boston to Washington DC (Boswash corridor) – megalopolis
Southern Great Lakes
Southern California
German Ruhr
Japan's Tokaido

Megalopolis – downtown areas retain distinctive identities, but periphery the boundaries overlap

Key Issue 2: Where Are People Distributed Within Urban Areas?

Three Models of Urban Structure – where people tend to live in urban areas

1. **Concentric Zone Model** – examine distribution of social groups
 - a. 1923 – E.W. Burgess – city grows outward in a series of concentric rings (based on Chicago)
 - b. innermost – CBD (central business district) – non residential –tertiary employment located- urban transport infrastructure converges – most accessible zone
 - c. 2nd ring – transition – industry and poorer quality housing – immigrants – most transport sites (RR, ports) located adjacent to central area
 - d. 3rd ring – modest older houses – stable, working class families – gradually reconvered to other uses by expanding manufacture/industry activities
 - e. 4th ring – newer, more spacious houses for middle class families
 - f. 5th ring – commuter's zone, beyond the continuous built up city
 - g. ASSUMES relationship between socio-economic status & distance from CBD –further out – better quality of life- longer commute
2. **Sector Model**
 - a. 1939 Homer Hoyt – city develops in a series of sectors, not rings
 - b. certain areas more attractive for various activities
 - c. as city grows expands outward in a wedge
 - d. best housing found in corridor extending from downtown to the outer edge of the city

- e. Industrial and retailing activities develop in other sectors, usually along good transportation lines
3. **Multiple Nuclei model** –
 - a. 1945 Harris and Ullman – city is complex structure that includes more than one center around which activities revolve
 - b. Ex. Port, neighborhood business center, university, airport, and park
 - c. Says some activities are attractive to particular nodes, others avoid them
 - d. Ex. University attracts well educated, pizzerias, bookstores
 - e. Ex. Airport attracts hotels and warehouses
 4. Geographic Applications of the Models
 - a. Help understand where people with different social characteristics tend to live w/i an urban area
 - b. Effective use depends on availability of data at the scale of individual neighborhoods.
 - c. Urban areas in US divided into **census tracts**, which contain @ 5,000 residents & corresponds to possible neighborhood boundaries – census updates data on the characteristics of the residents in each tract
 - i. Spatial distribution of any of the characteristics can be plotted on a map of the census tracts to create an overall picture of where various types of people tend to live –called **social area analysis**
 5. Weaknesses of the models
 - a. Models are too simple
 - b. They fail to consider the variety of reasons that lead people to select particular locations
 - c. They question their relevance to contemporary urban patterns (date to period between World Wars)

Use of Models outside North America

1. European Cities – wealthy cluster along a sector extending out from the CBD (Paris – rich move to SW hills near royal palace)
 - a. Wealthy typically on higher elevation and near palaces
 - b. Wealthy also live in the inner rings of the high-class sector – close to best shops, restaurants, cafes, etc.
 - c. Some purchase abandoned farm buildings in rural settlements for use as second homes – green space
 - d. Past – richer people live on 1st or 2nd floor – poor higher up or in basement – renovations have pushed poor out to outskirts of the cities
 - e. High density, high rise apartments house the poor – new immigrants – results in clustering of people with social and economic problems
2. Less Developed Countries
 - a. Poor in suburbs, rich near the center of cities & sector extending from the center – most LDC influence by European colonial era

- b. Squatter Settlements – have few services – neither city or residents can afford them. Shelters constructed with scavenged materials

Key Issue #3: Why Do Inner Cities Have Distinctive Problems?

1. Inner city Physical Problems

- a. Deterioration – number of low income residents increase – the territory they occupy expands
- b. Middle class families move out to newer housing farther out & sell or rent their houses to lower income families
- c. **Filtering** – Large houses are subdivided into smaller dwellings for low income families – occupancy by successive waves of low income people
- d. Landlords stop maintaining houses when the rent they collect is less than the maintenance cost
- e. House abandoned – so gov't goes after landlords to repair – which may speed abandonment because landlords cant recover expenses in rent
- f. Schools and shops close due to declining population
- g. Through filtering process – poor families are moved to less deteriorated housing farther from center
- h. **Redlining** – areas designated on a map as too risky for banks to make loans
- i. **Urban Renewal** demolishing substandard inner city housing
- j. **Public housing**