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Scholarship 2014 Geography

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RESOURCE BOOKLET

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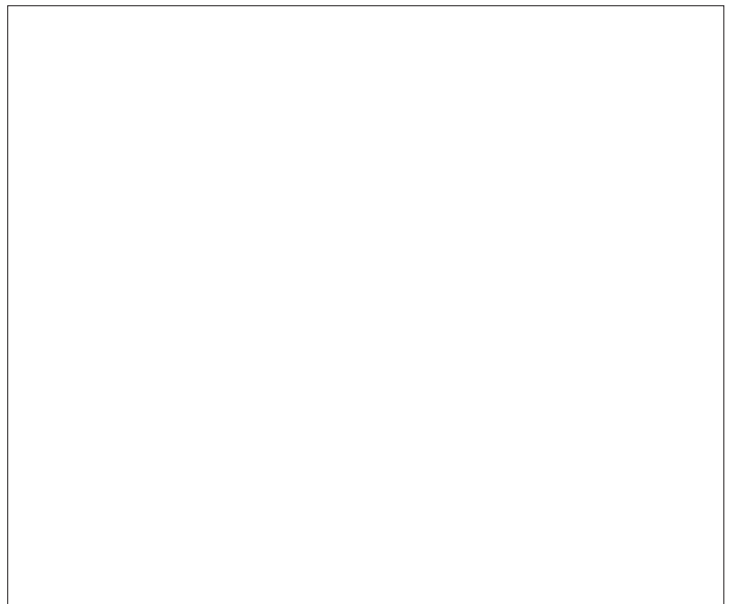
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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations view of the changing role and functions of urban areas / cities

The world's population is increasingly urban. In 2008, for the first time in human history, over 50 % of us lived in urban areas. Urbanisation is driven by development.



**Figure 1: Dubrovnik, Croatia
(an example of a walled city)**

Until this period of rapid urban growth in Europe, Asia was as important economically, if not more so, than Europe.

Many cities today are no longer manufacturing centres.

At the same time, the UN wishes to see a new type of city develop where the focus is no longer totally on economic outcomes.

UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat advocates for a new type of city – the city of the 21st century – that is, a ‘good’, people-centred city, one that is capable of integrating the tangible and more intangible aspects of prosperity, in the process shedding the inefficient, unsustainable forms and functionalities of the city of the previous century.

... there is a need to reconsider the existing model of urban development, introducing major changes in the form and function of the city – an approach that reshapes urban space through appropriate planning and design, creating a city at a human scale where diversity, connectivity, and physical integration are all interwoven, and prosperity is shared.

URBANISATION

“Urbanisation is an inevitable force of development. Cities are more productive than rural areas.

They can achieve the economies of scale, agglomeration, and urbanisation. Cities are the driving forces of national economic development.”

UN-Habitat (2011).

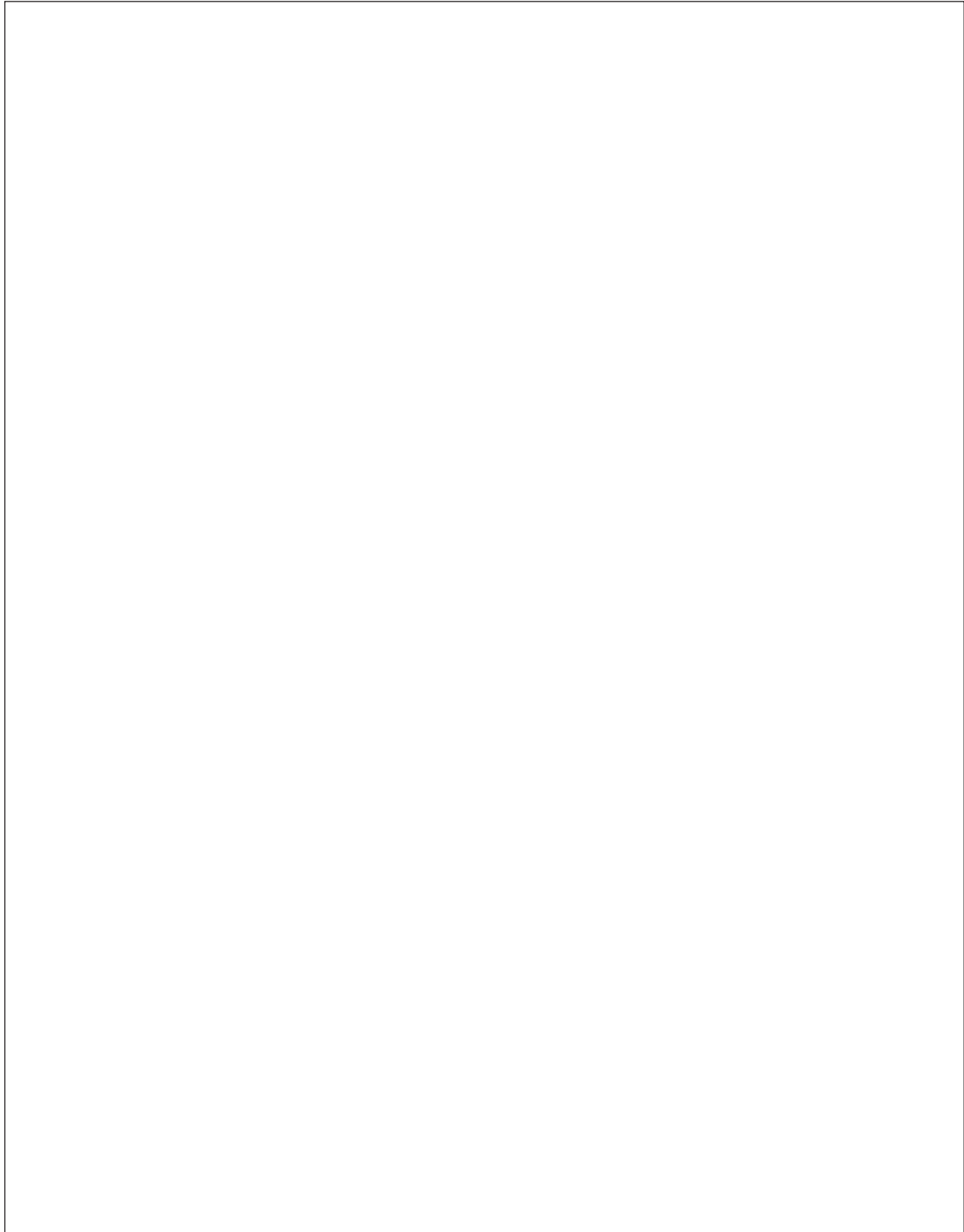


Figure 2: The processes of urbanisation and their spatial impact



**Figure 3: Number of years for urban populations
(regions or countries) to increase from 10% to 50%**

CHANGING CITIES

“For the 380 ‘million-cities’ in 2000, nearly three-quarters were already urban centres 200 years ago, while more than a fifth have been urban centres for at least 500 years. One in five of the world’s 380 largest cities in 2000 had already been founded 2000 years ago.”

International Institute for Environment and Development (2007).



Figure 4: Urban sprawl

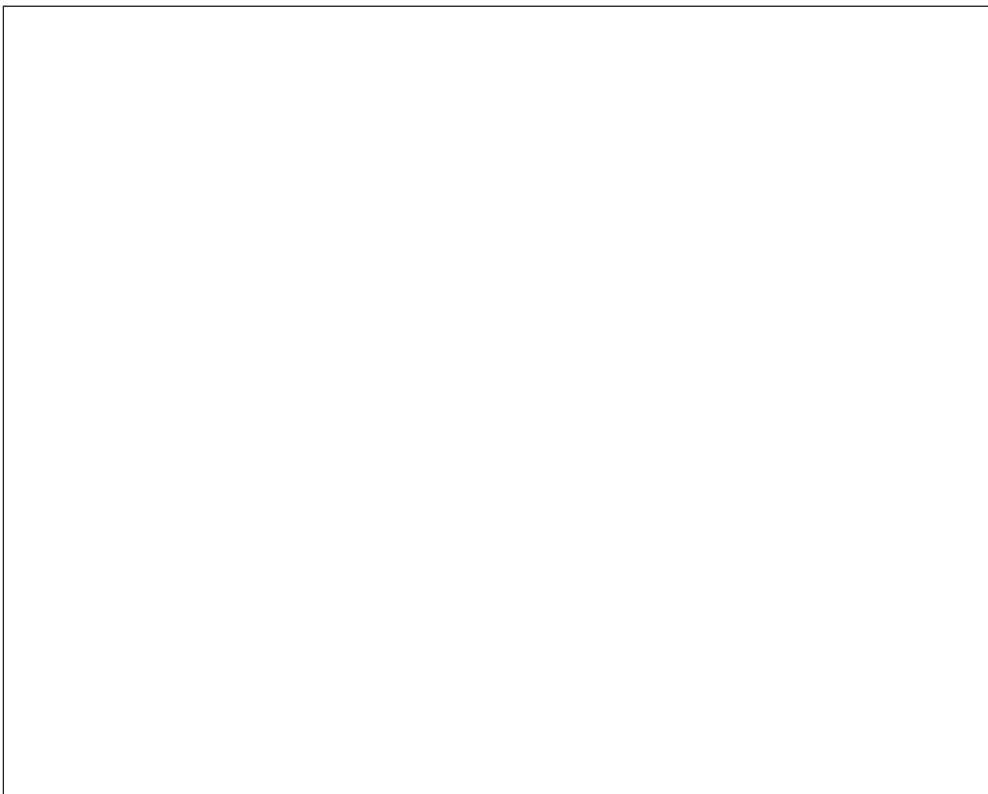


Figure 5: Push and pull factors which contribute to urbanisation

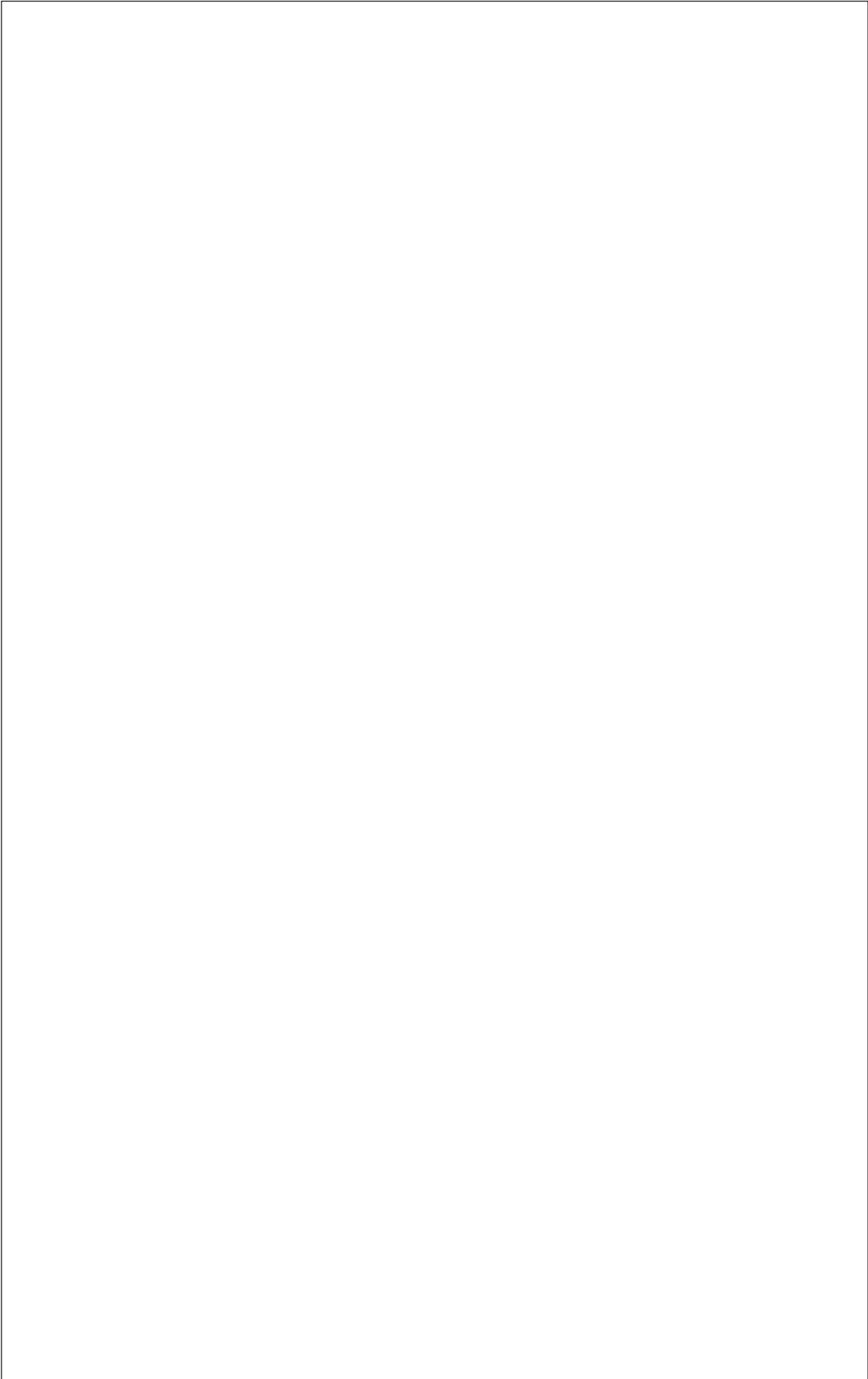


Figure 6: Megacities of 10M to 39M, in 1950, 2010, and 2025 (estimated)

Las Vegas has grown from a relatively small city of 165 000 residents in 1984 to 580 000 residents in 2010 as shown in **Figure 7**, with an estimated population of 600 000 in 2013.

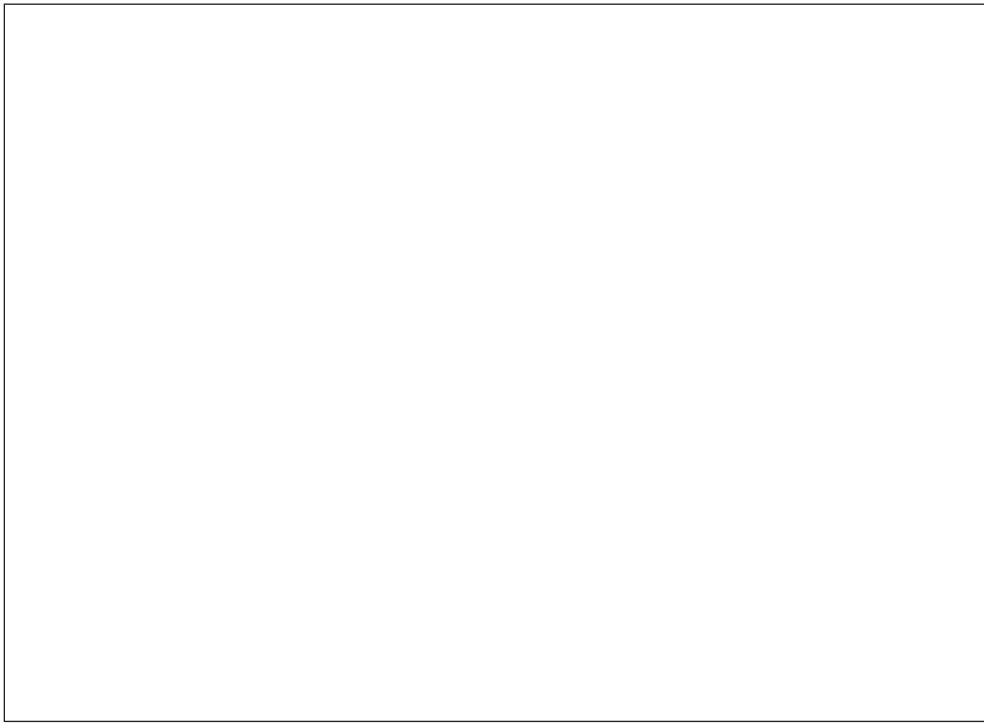


Figure 7: Urban growth rate in Las Vegas

“Cities in developing countries are even denser and use far fewer resources. But that’s mostly because poor people don’t consume a lot.”

International Institute for Environment and Development, *National Geographic* (2011).

Between 2002 and 2012, 0.88 million new urban dwellers were added to Asia’s urban areas every week. Africa saw an additional 0.23 million new urban residents added each week, contributing to the 15-year percentage growth as shown in **Figure 8**.

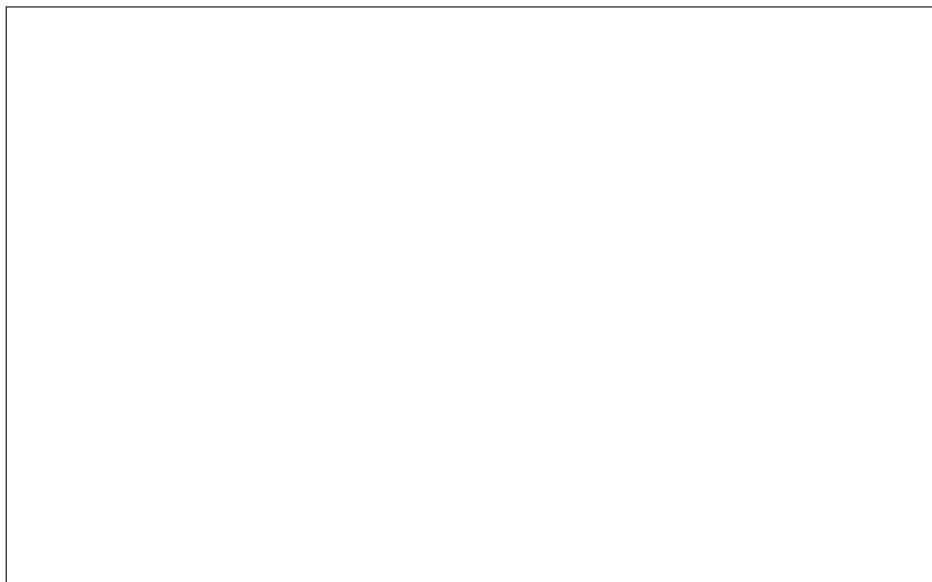


Figure 8: Urban growth rate in Africa: comparative percentage growth in two 15-year periods

“The top 100 cities ranked by their contribution to global GDP growth in the next 15 years — we call this group the City 100 — will contribute around 35 % of GDP growth to 2025. And the top 600 — the City 600 — will generate 60 % of global GDP growth during this period.”

McKinsey Global Institute (2011).



Figure 9: Cities segmented by contribution to total GDP (2010), % of total

Note: GDP measured at real exchange rate; some figures may not sum to 100%, because of rounding.

URBAN ISSUES

... when cities grow to certain levels, they start to produce negative impacts such as overcrowding, congestion, and pollution.

The issues facing cities around the world today are diverse in character and scale, and can be classified broadly as economic, sociocultural, environmental, image, and governmental issues.

Moving to the city offers him the chance to better himself, something unlikely to happen in his village.

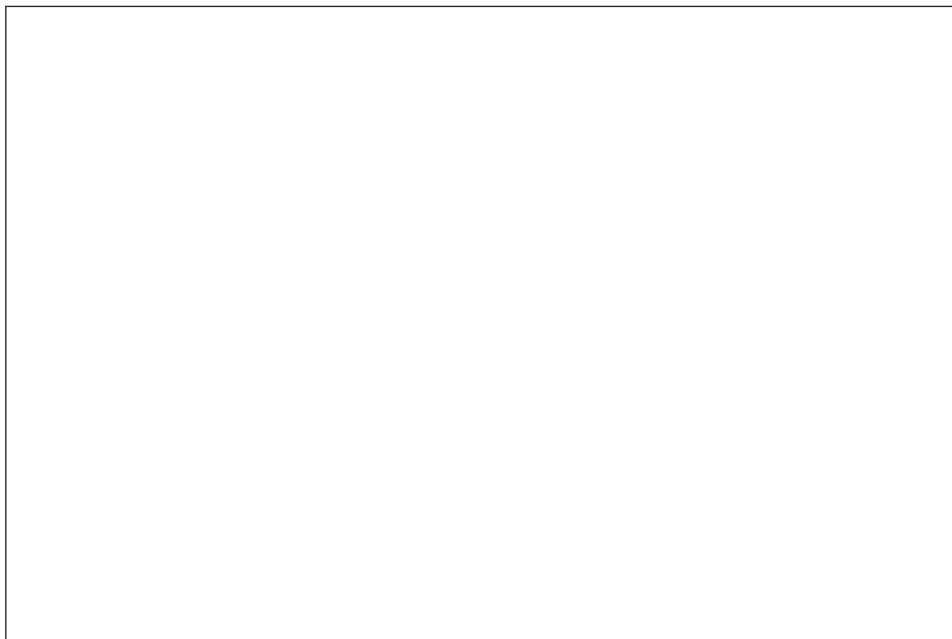


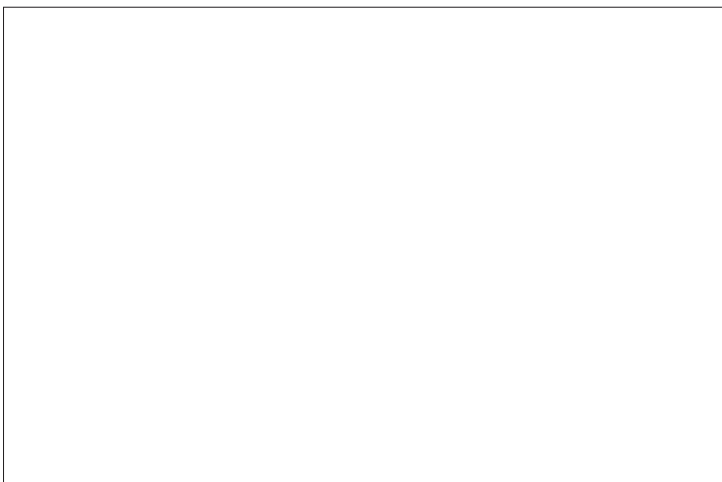
Figure 10: The Kibera Slum in Nairobi, Kenya

“As our cities grow bigger, urban sprawl is beginning to affect our quality of life.

A commuter who drives just one hour each day spends the equivalent of nine working weeks a year in a car.”

David Suzuki Foundation, *Discourage Urban Sprawl*.

Traffic congestion

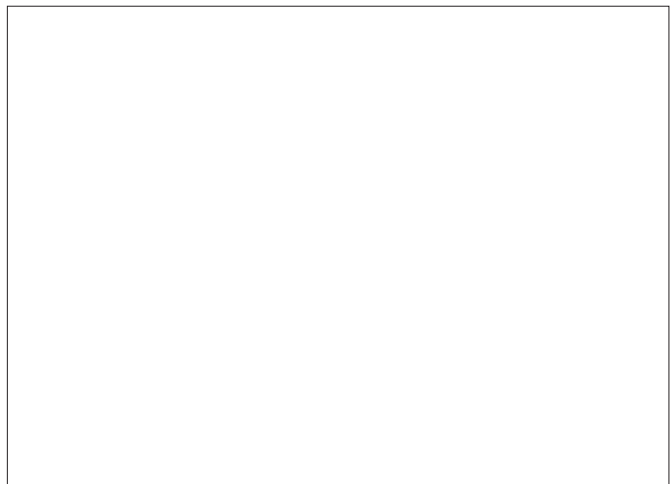


Lagos, Nigeria, is reputed to have the worst traffic jams in Africa as shown in **Figure 11**, and is estimated to be one of the most densely populated cities in the world with a population of 14 million.

Figure 11: Traffic congestion in Lagos

Air pollution

Air pollution in Mexico City as shown in **Figure 12**, is a continuing concern for citizens, health experts, and environmentalists.



At the time, pollution was thought to cause 1 000 deaths and 35 000 hospitalisations per year.

Figure 12: Air pollution in Mexico City, Mexico

Housing affordability

For the last decade, *Demographia* has surveyed the cost of housing in major metropolitan markets and its relation to median household incomes.

Palmerston North / Manawatu is the most affordable metropolitan area in New Zealand, with a median house price of \$231 100 and a median household income of \$50 900.

Note: Demographia is an international public policy firm with an interest in urban areas.

“Cities and towns also have important roles in social transformation.

The history of cities and towns is inexorably linked to that of civilisation in general.”

UN-Habitat (2011).

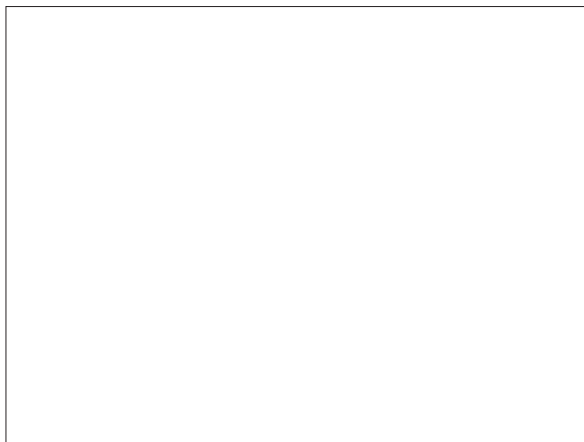
Expensive cities are killing creativity

Recent reports have found cities are now killing creativity.

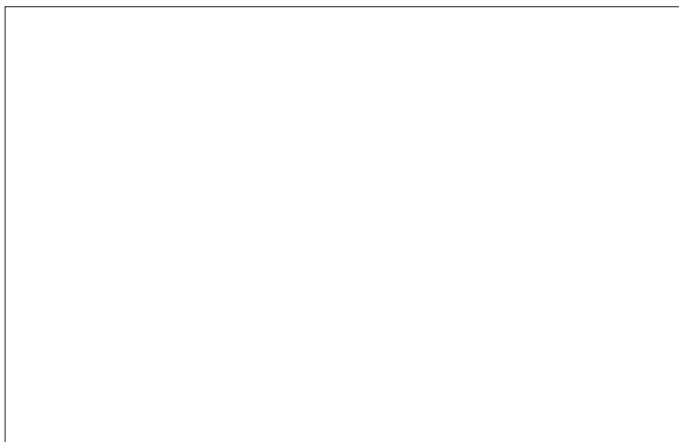
This is the New York artist today: a literal servant to corporate elites, hired to impart “creativity” to children whose bank accounts outstrip their own.

Gated communities

The gated communities across the globe have many similarities as shown in **Figures 13** and **14** – this is often thought of as an example of cultural diffusion and a result of globalisation.



**Figure 13: A gated community
in Guangzhou, China**



**Figure 14: A gated community
in Florida, USA**

Proponents of gated communities maintain that the reduction or exclusion of people who would only be passing through, or more generally, of all non-local people, makes any “stranger” much more recognisable in the closed local environment, and thus reduces crime danger.

Isolation

The first Turkish 'guest workers' arrived in West Germany 50 years ago.

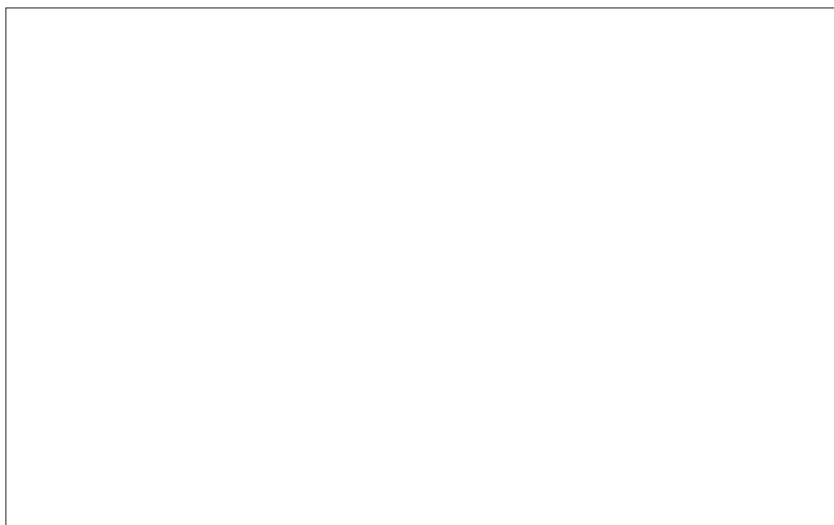


Figure 15: At home in a foreign city

The other 80 % live on the so-called 'Hartz IV' (state social benefits), and 70 % of their children leave school without finishing their basic education.

City issues and the urbanisation pathway

Figure 16 illustrates how city issues can be grouped into another set of broad categories – in this case, what happens along the urbanisation and development pathways:

- issues that decline in relative significance (eg poverty and deprivation)
- issues that become more significant (eg the ecological footprint)
- issues that remain fairly constant (eg traffic congestion).

The significance and scale of issues, as well as the actual mix, change along the pathway.

*

†

Figure 16: City issues and the urbanisation pathway

*LEDC = Less Economically Developed Country

†MEDC = More Economically Developed Country

MAKING CITIES MORE SUSTAINABLE

If the consequences of rapid urbanisation are frequently cited as overcrowding, traffic congestion, waste management issues, and lack of green spaces, all of which result in high CO₂ emissions, then the answer to these problems is often cited as sustainability.

Increasingly, business and investors want to locate in these cities, which are desirable to live and work in, so the sustainable policies are not limiting economic development, but in fact stimulating it.

Table 1: Why the 'top 5' are sustainable cities

Vancouver, Canada	
San Francisco, USA	
Oslo, Norway	
Curitiba, Brazil	
Copenhagen, Denmark	

“Per capita, city dwellers tread more lightly in other ways as well. Their roads, sewers, and power lines are shorter and so use fewer resources.

In cities like New York, per capita energy use and carbon emissions are much lower than the national average.”

National Geographic (2011).



Figure 17: Do cities present a greener way to live?

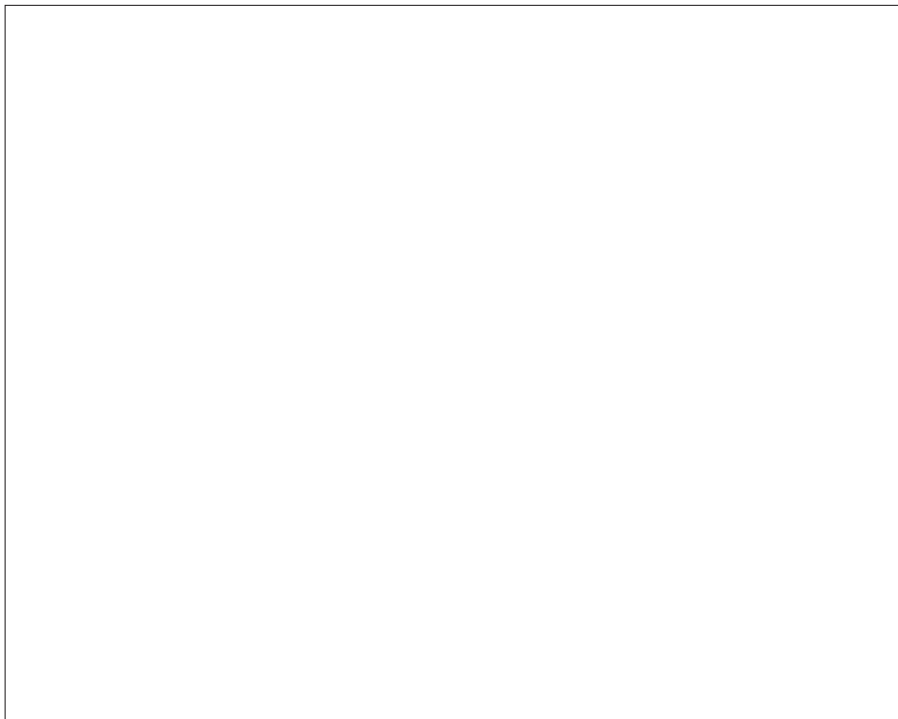


Figure 18: Potential solutions?

Sustainable development elsewhere

Many other cities are now looking at how the 'top 5' have achieved such high levels of sustainability. For example, public transport efficiency (being on time and fast) and cleanliness has become a priority for the public authorities in Singapore as shown in **Figure 19**.

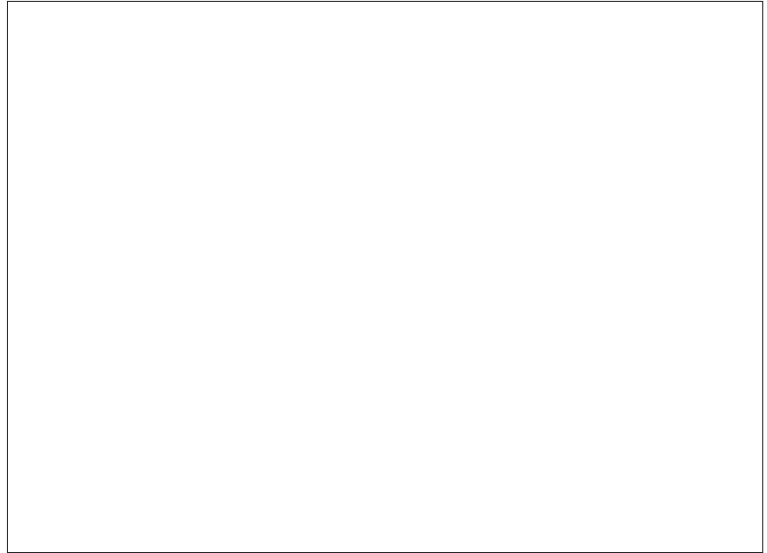


Figure 19: Efficient, clean public transport in Singapore

In Amsterdam (and elsewhere in the Netherlands), the range of people cycling is now much broader than in many other cities as shown in **Figure 20**. It really is the best way to get around.

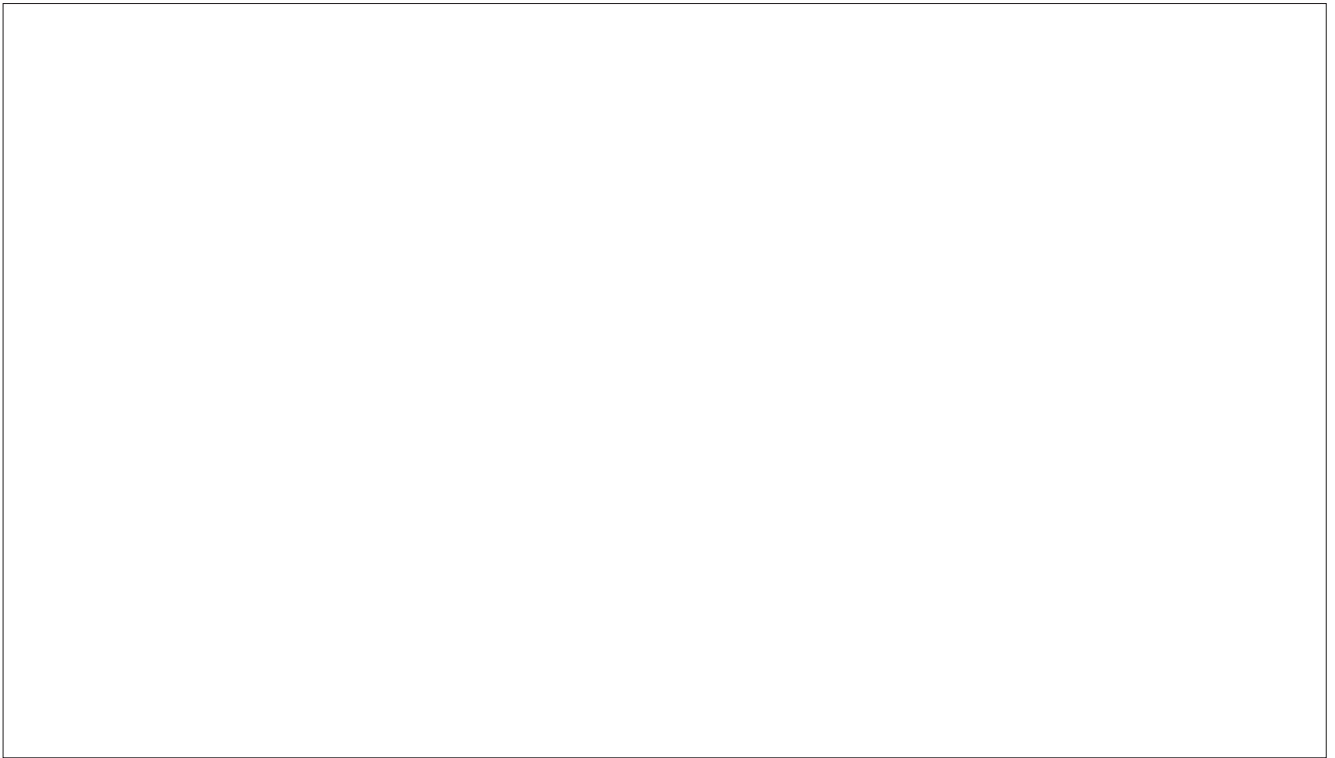


Figure 20: Cycling in Amsterdam

Beekeeping in New York City

Since beekeeping was legalised in March 2010, hives have been popping up on buildings citywide in New York as shown in **Figure 21**.



Figure 21: Beekeeping on rooftops in NYC

With his other organisation, *Bees Without Borders*, Coté teaches beekeeping as a sustainable way to make money in countries such as Iraq, Fiji, and Kenya.

Vertical Farming

The concept of indoor farming is not new, since hothouse production of tomatoes, a wide variety of herbs, and other produce has been in vogue for some time.

Vertical farms, many stories high, will eventually be situated in the heart of the world's urban centres.

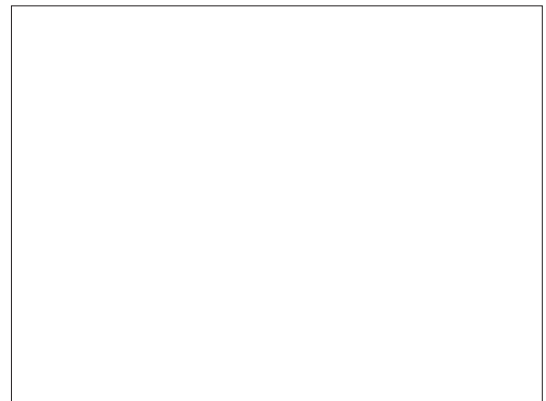


Figure 22: Indoor vertical farming

Seoul tears down an urban highway and the city can breathe again

The story of the Cheonggyecheon (pronounced chung-yay-chun) river started hundreds of years ago during the reign of the Joseon Dynasty, when the kingdom's castle was considered the "head" of Seoul, and the river the "body".

Figure 23 tells the story better than any words can. In place of a blight-perpetrating freeway, Seoul Mayor Lee Myung-bak initiated a project to create an astounding public amenity: a 5.8-kilometre linear, green river park, beautifying downtown Seoul and giving its residents a spectacular setting in which to walk, splash, linger, and truly enjoy the city.

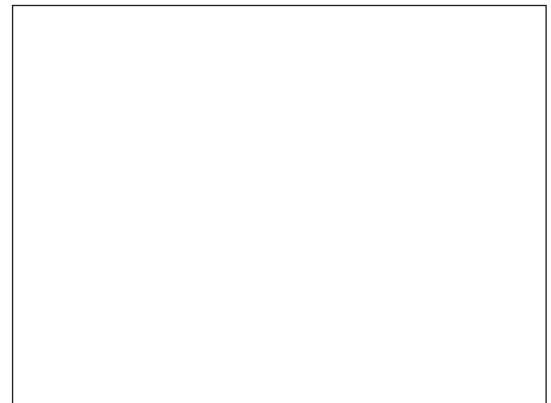


Figure 23: The Cheonggyecheon River restoration project

Changes to the landscape in New York

The High Line is a 1.6 km New York City linear park shown in **Figure 24**, which is built on a 2.3 km section of the elevated former New York Central Railroad spur called the West Side Line.



Figure 24: The High Line Park in NYC

The recycling of the railway into an urban park has spurred real estate development in the neighbourhoods that lie along the line.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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