A stylized, hand-drawn illustration of a bustling city in the developing world. The scene is filled with tall, blocky buildings in shades of orange, brown, and blue. In the foreground, there are several figures: a person in a dark, patterned garment, a person in a light-colored dress, and a person with dark hair. The street is crowded with various modes of transport, including bicycles, motorcycles, and cars. The overall style is graphic and expressive, with bold lines and a warm color palette.

The City in the Developing World

Robert B. Potter & Sally Lloyd-Evans

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Robert B. Potter

and

Sally Lloyd-Evans



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For
Sam
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Katherine

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Preface

This textbook has been designed as an introduction to the study of towns and cities in developing countries, for undergraduate and Masters level candidates taking courses in institutions of higher education. We were drawn to the direct and forceful nature of the title *The City in the Developing World*. However, we should stress at the outset that use of the definite article as the first word in the title is intended to emphasise the salience of the role which urban settlements play in developing areas. Use of the expression 'The City' is not intended to imply that we believe that there is any such thing as a typical or archetypal urban form in the developing world. Indeed, one of the major themes which is explored in the text is the diversity of urban circumstances which currently appear to be resulting from so-called 'global processes'.

As well as cherished themes which students need to consider fully, such as the progress of world urbanisation, the nature of urban primacy and the provision of low-income housing, we have endeavoured to stress topics of pressing contemporary relevance such as the relations between cities and social surpluses, globalisation, convergence, divergence, modernity and postmodernity, poverty alleviation, education and health, emerging urban forms, child and female labour, environment and urbanisation, sustainability, empowerment, governance and so-called 'new urban management programmes'. Gender issues receive particular attention in many of the chapters, rather than being dealt with as a separate topic. We hope that the outcome is a balanced account incorporating both established and emerging concepts and ideas. For example, the process of globalisation is first discussed in relation to the structure of urban systems, in an account which endeavours to link together established notions concerning urban primacy with newer perspectives on global convergence, divergence, global shifts, and the emergence of global or world cities. The concept of globalisation then features in later chapters when considering employment, work and the city, and in relation to evolving urban structure. Dealing with such contemporary phenomena and processes, we have been fortunate in working with a publisher that respected our view that this type of textbook needs to be well illustrated, with both photographic plates and line diagrams.

We are, of course, grateful to many people, not least our colleagues and those whom we have taught, in helping to shape and sharpen our ideas. In addition, we should particularly like to thank Sophie Bowlby, Erlet Cater, Dennis Conway, David Hilling, Cathy McIlwaine, Michael Lloyd-Evans,

Virginia Potter, Andrew Powell and David Simon, all of whom read and commented on various draft chapters. Heather Browning assisted with some of the cartography, whilst Erika Meller prepared the photographic prints from colour slides. Kathy Roberts helped with typing up the tables. We should also like to record our appreciation of all who have been involved with the preparation and production of this volume at Addison Wesley Longman, for their manifest care and efficiency.

We hope that this concise introduction will act as a useful starting point for those teaching and learning about urban phenomena and urban processes in the developing world. We look forward to receiving the reactions of teachers and students in the form of reviews and direct communications via our respective institutional addresses. It is also our fervent hope that the content of the constituent chapters of this book will encourage undergraduates and post-graduates alike to undertake thesis and dissertation work set in developing countries.

Robert Potter
Sally Lloyd-Evans
November 1997

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Thanks also to Janet Carlsson for plate 7.4 and Astrid Bishop for plate 8.2.

Introduction

This book has been written and designed specifically as an up-to-date and comprehensive introduction to the fascinating and policy-relevant field of urbanisation in developing countries. The primary target audience is undergraduates in the fields of geography, development studies, planning, economics and the social sciences defined more generally, who are either taking specialist courses on urban processes in the Third World, or reading for options which deal with development studies, development theory, gender and development or issues of Third World development more generally.

As there are already some very good books dealing with urbanisation, urban processes and cities in developing countries, it is clearly important to chart what we see as the distinctive aims and objectives of this textbook. As authors, our overarching goal has been to place an understanding of the developing world city in its wider global context. Firstly, this is done by means of developing the concept of **social surplus product** as a key to understanding the character of the contemporary Third World city. Secondly, throughout this text, the city in developing areas is centrally placed in the context of **global social, economic, political and cultural change**. Thus, the important themes of **globalisation** and **postmodernity** are examined both in relation to the structure of sets of towns and cities which make up the national or regional urban system, and in respect of ideas and concepts dealing with the morphology, structure and social patterning of individual urban areas. In this latter context, the focus is on how global processes are affecting the individuals and households which make up cities, and how people are responding on a day-to-day basis. Here characteristics such as age, gender, class and ethnicity are an important focus. Another major aim of the book is to illustrate and exemplify the argument that all theories of development can be viewed as explicit theories of urbanisation.

Taken together, these aims are closely reflected in the structure of the book. Chapters 1 and 2 are introductory in the sense of defining the nature and scope of urbanisation in the Third World, viewing this in broad historical terms since the advent of cities and urban living, and thereby developing the concept of social surplus product as a central theme for analysis in the remainder of the book.

Broadly speaking, the book is divided into three parts. Chapters 1 to 4 look at the issues surrounding urban systems and change in developing areas of the world. Equally broadly defined, Chapters 5–8 then focus attention on what is

happening within cities in Third World regions. The last two chapters (9 and 10) are devoted to the consideration of policy issues, involving urban environmental conditions and questions of urban environmental sustainability, plus the wider arena of urban policies and strategies.

In overall terms, the book endeavours to explore in detail the relationships which exist between cities in developing areas and attendant processes of globalisation and change. An overarching argument is that global processes are not leading to uniformity between cities in different parts of the world. Far from it: although the generic problems faced by cities in terms of housing deficits, congestion and unemployment show considerable commonalities, urban processes seem to be leading to further differentiation between regions and places. In many instances, trends towards further localisation can be identified as the direct outcome on the ground. In this respect the processes of **global convergence** and **global divergence** act as overarching concepts informing our analysis of the city in the developing world.

As well as examining such vital topics as housing, employment and work, topics which are generally covered in the majority of texts on urbanisation in developing areas, the present volume emphasises issues which up to this point have customarily received less attention, or which have been almost entirely neglected. These include urbanisation and the provision of basic needs, including education, health, food and nutrition, the links between urban systems structure and development, the morphology and structure of cities in the developing world, and cities and the concept of environmental sustainability.

Another aim of the volume is to link the analysis of the Third World city with current themes of debate in the social sciences. It has already been noted that these include globalisation, modernity–postmodernity, convergence, divergence, the significance of gender and ethnicity, especially in relation to housing, basic needs and employment, world cities, global cities, the influences of structural adjustment policies and neo-liberalism, the new poverty agenda, the salience of civil society, along with the potential influence of new social movements.

The final chapters of the book make the telling point that it seems more than likely that environmental factors will be of pressing significance in shaping the future of cities in the Third World. The policy agenda, which is currently increasingly driven by the World Bank's 'urban push', and what is described as the new urban management programme, is the subject of discussion in the very final chapter of the volume.

The nature and scale of urbanisation in the developing world

Introduction

One of the most frequently cited statistics summarising the process of urbanisation which is currently being experienced in the so-called developing world is that the towns and cities of these poorer countries are receiving a staggering 45 million new urban inhabitants each and every year. This vast number of new city dwellers in the poorer countries of the world – amounting to somewhere in the region of 125,000 new urban citizens a day worldwide – is the outcome of high levels of rural-to-urban migration in combination with high rates of natural increase of the population. By comparison, approximately 7 million urban residents are added on an annual basis to the towns and cities in the countries of the more developed world.

The scale of this process of urbanisation is difficult to comprehend in respect of the numbers of houses, water connections, schools, clinics, hospital beds and jobs that will be required over the coming decades in the more impoverished countries of the world. Quite simply, we are living through what can only be described as a record-breaking era: one during which the world has experienced its fastest ever rate of urbanisation. The level of urbanisation pertaining to a region, nation or any other territory is measured as the proportion of the total population that is to be found living in towns and cities, however these are defined, but normally following local definitions. Between 1950 and 2025, a period of some 75 years, the overall level of world urbanisation will have increased from 29 to 61 per cent. The half-way point at which 50 per cent of the world's population is to be found living in urban places is set to be passed shortly after the year 2000. Between 1960 and 1970, the world's urban population grew by 16.8 per cent. From 1970 to 1980, it increased again by 16.9 per cent. If the same rate were to have continued from 1980 onward, the world would have been totally urbanised by the year 2031, a period of just over 50 years. Such is the magnitude of the urban processes which is to be faced as we enter the twenty-first century.

These few illustrative statistics demonstrate that urbanisation and urban growth are occurring much more rapidly in the developing world than they did in the more developed world regions during the heyday of the Industrial Revolution. Later in this introductory chapter, statistics showing the rate of urbanisation in the various continental regions making up both the more developed and less developed world between now and the first quarter of the

twenty-first century will be considered in detail. But before that, the changing history of world urbanisation which has just been sketched out in the broadest of terms, will be amplified more fully.

The magnitude of the developmental pressures presented by the current global urban process is perhaps put in more accessible terms by a hypothetical scenario which was presented in the news magazine *Newsweek*, under the admittedly very alarmist title 'An age of nightmare cities: flood tides of humanity will create mammoth urban problems for the Third World':

It is a sweltering afternoon in the year 2000, in the biggest city ever seen on earth. Twenty-eight million people swarm about an 8-mile-wide mass of smoky slums, surrounding walled-in, high-rise islands of power and wealth. Half the city's work force is unemployed, most of the rich have fled and many of the poor have never even seen downtown. In a nameless, open-sewer shanty-town, the victims of yet another cholera epidemic are dying slowly, without any medical attention. Across the town, the water truck fails to arrive for the third straight day; police move in with tear gas to quell one more desultory riot. And at a score of gritty plazas around the city, groaning buses from the parched countryside empty a thousand more hungry peasants into what they think is their city of hope. (*Newsweek*, 31 October 1993, p. 26)

Historical perspectives on world urbanisation

As noted by the Brandt Report (1980) *North-South: a Programme for Survival*, together with poverty and overpopulation, urbanisation is one of the most significant processes affecting human societies in the twentieth century. Until recent times, urbanisation was almost universally seen as a direct indication of modernisation, development and economic growth. Throughout history, industrialisation and urbanisation have tended to occur together. But this simple monotonic relationship which has held for more than 6000 years, since the emergence of the very first cities, has changed quite fundamentally over the past four decades.

The world is currently experiencing an entirely new era of urbanisation. Today, it is the nations which make up the developing world which are experiencing the highest rates of urbanisation. How and why has this come about? In order to address this question, we need to look briefly at the whole history of world urbanisation.

The first settlements that can be referred to as urban date from the so-called **Urban Revolution**. This followed the **Neolithic Revolution**, which occurred in the Middle East some 10,000–8000 BC. It is important to understand the precise processes involved in this transition to urban living, for they are essentially the same forces that serve to shape the overall pattern of urbanisation in the contemporary global context. Accordingly, these processes are examined in detail at the beginning of Chapter 2.

For many centuries after the development of the first cities, the overall level of world urbanisation increased only very slowly and the urban areas which existed were small and effectively local in scope (Figure 1.1a and b). After the

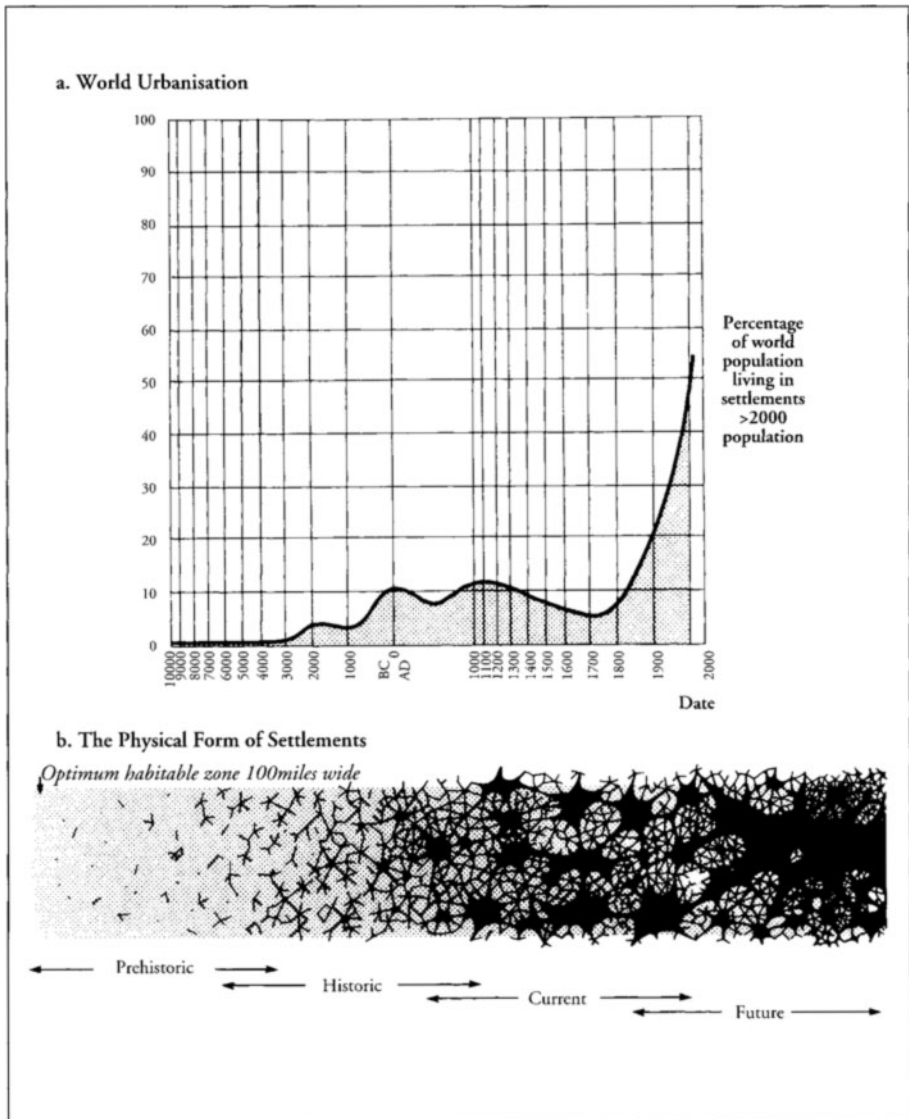


Figure 1.1 A summary of global urbanisation, 10,000 BC to 2000 AD (source: Potter, 1985).

Urban Revolution, the subsequent history of urbanisation in the Middle East and Europe was complex and probably involved elements of both independent invention and spatial diffusion. However, it was with the rise of the great empires of the Greeks and the Romans, and to a lesser extent the Muslims, that urban life spread widely across Europe. The primary diffusion of the city that occurred under the Greeks was intensified under the Roman Empire in the first three centuries AD (Pounds, 1969). However, city life declined with the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century AD. In fact, it was not until the tenth and eleventh centuries that city development became important once

Table 1.1 Stages in the evolution of human societies

Stage no.	Stage	Approximate time period
1	Reciprocal societies	Up to 10,000 BC
2	Rank redistribution	10,000 to 3500 BC
3	Money-exchange systems	Up to 1400 AD
4	Mercantile societies	1492–1800
5	Capitalism: industrial and late	1850–2000+

Sources: after Johnston, 1980; Polanyi, 1968; Harvey, 1973

more, and it was the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that saw the rise of the medieval city, based on increasing local and long-distance trade. By the end of the Middle Ages, most of the major European cities of today were already in existence.

Understanding these and subsequent developments requires a brief overview of the development of human societies and the rise of the world economy. In his book *City and Society: An Outline for Urban Geography*, Ron Johnston (1980) recognised five broad epochs in the evolution of society: reciprocity, rank redistribution, money-exchange, mercantilism, and capitalism (both industrial and late), as summarised in Table 1.1.

The initial stage of the **Reciprocal Society**, the details of which will be fully explained in the next chapter, was synonymous with the first small societies that were of limited territorial extent. These settlement groupings were fully egalitarian and were based on consensus and democratic forms of decision-making. In them, exchange was based on reciprocal principles and no power or elite group existed. Such societies were pre-urban in all respects. Where productivity increased and a surplus product was first stored, the egalitarian structure of society broke down, being replaced by a rank-ordering of the members of society. At the same time, goods and labour were redistributed among members, so that the stage is referred to as that of '**Rank Redistribution**'. This is synonymous with the Urban Revolution, and the first emergence of military and religious power. Precisely why and how this should have occurred is considered in depth in Chapter 2.

Subsequently, trade was required in order to enhance economic growth, and was met by small-scale territorial expansion. Such a need was the precursor to the third societal change, identified as the **Money-Exchange** system, for trade necessitated the establishment of a common unit of exchange, or a monetary system. At this point, monetary rents could start to be charged by the owners of land and property for its use, rather than payments in kind. Johnston summarises how this led to a clear threefold division of society into an elite, a subject group and an intermediate set of administrators and military personnel.

However, in regard to global urbanisation, it was with the emergence of the fourth and fifth stages of the sequence, those of **mercantilism** and **capitalism** respectively, that major developments occurred. The principal hallmark of

the mercantile society was the expansion of trade, and the outcome was the establishment of merchants whose job it was to articulate trade by buying and selling commodities, mainly over long distances. As the role of merchants demands that they buy goods first and then sell them, this required that they had access to capital before starting to trade. Surplus capital was now held by the owners of land, who could offer loans for merchants to establish themselves, so that a close interdependence could emerge between these two groups. Thus, some of the surplus previously resting entirely in the hands of the ruling elite was now shared with the merchant group. This early development of mercantile societies occurred in Europe around the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries and was associated with much more complex and interlinked settlement and economic patterns (see Figure 1.1a and b, page 5).

The most important development, however, came with **colonialism**, for continued mercantile growth required greater land resources. Historically, such growth occurred during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, first by means of trading expeditions, and then by distant colonialism, a trans-oceanic version of local colonial expansion, mainly involving areas of low socio-economic development. If an indigenous population already existed, colonial power could be enforced by administrative elites on tours of duty. In extreme cases, local populations were entirely wiped out, as in many Caribbean territories, where subsequently they were replaced by African slaves and indentured labourers (Lowenthal, 1960). In formerly unoccupied lands, a colony could be established, and under such conditions ports came to dominate the urban system, acting as **gateways** to the new colony. Frequently, a coastal–linear settlement pattern emerged, often characterised by the beginnings of strong urban concentration or **primacy** and **spatial polarisation**, a phenomenon which is further examined in Chapters 2 and 3. Thus, the settlement pattern of both the colony and the colonial power developed symbiotically from this point onward.

Whilst some commentators stress that the process of European colonisation of the traditional world by the Spanish, Portuguese, British, Germans, Belgians, French, Dutch and Italians represented the spread of economic growth and development, others argue that it represented a form of exploitation and expropriation, an observation that gives rise to ideas concerning modernisation and trickle-down processes on the one hand, and dependency and backwash on the other. These processes and associated philosophies of development are fully discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. Certainly the process involved the flow of extra profits or **surplus value**, often hailing from the production of a staple agricultural product such as sugar, first from rural areas to the colony's gateway primate city and thence to the major cities of the colonial power. These developments witnessed the increasing economic specialisation of countries and the international division of labour. An important conclusion is reached: that from this time onward, the economic evolution of the developed and developing worlds has been inextricably interlinked. Similarly, the rise of urbanisation can only be correctly interpreted if it is seen as a conjoint process involving the developed and developing worlds together. This argument of interdependent development and interdependent urbanisation (Brookfield, 1971; Roberts, 1978,

1995; Potter, 1985, 1992b) has important implications for both urban theory and practice, as will be demonstrated in this text.

The fifth historical societal stage identified by Johnston, **capitalism**, represents a complex development, but its principal outcome was that the scale of employment and production expanded dramatically with the rise of the factory system. Johnston (1980: 37) comments that 'although industrial capitalism is inextricably bound up with the factory system', its most important feature was, however, 'the alienation of labour power which enforces the working for wages'. Those with capital gained control over the means of production, whilst workers could only sell their labour. This first stage is known as **industrial capitalism**. As a subsequent stage, **late** or **monopoly capitalism** occurs when the potential market for goods becomes saturated. Under such circumstances, firms can only expand sales by capturing more of the existing market, so that successive mergers lead to a process of increasing industrial concentration.

It is the rise of industrial capitalism in the eighteenth century that brings us to the onset of the modern period of world urbanisation. Thus, the exponential growth of world urbanisation started only around 1800 (Figure 1.1a, page 5). At this point, only 3 per cent of world population was to be found living in urban settlements. The great growth in urbanisation came only with the Industrial Revolution in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Europe. Davis (1965) has stressed the importance of the enormous growth in productivity that came with the use of inanimate sources of energy and machinery. Similarly, Sjoberg (1960) has emphasised the salience of the scientific revolution as the basis for the Industrial Revolution. He notes that the advent of industrialisation brought large-scale production, improvements in agricultural implements and farming techniques, improvements in food preservation techniques and better transport and communications. All of these technical developments in the initial period of the Industrial Revolution up to 1830 contributed to both increasing productivity in agriculture and the parallel development of industry. The steam engine was undoubtedly the key invention, leading to the rise of the factory system, whereupon mechanisation and mass production became established. Taken together, these fundamental changes allowed people to congregate in the evolving industrial city.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, development and change became even more interdependent at a global level, involving increasing links between industrial and non-industrial countries. This increasingly close relationship is expressed by what is referred to as **dependency theory** (Frank, 1967). The approach, which will be fully explored in Chapter 2, was largely derived in the context of Latin America and the Caribbean, and suggests that the development of Third World nations has been dictated by its integration into the capitalist mode of production, and that the more such nations have been incorporated into the global capitalist system, the more underdeveloped they have become (Frank, 1966, 1967; Beckford, 1972; Hettne, 1994), rather than the other way around.

The approach has clear implications for urban development in the form of what may be referred to as '**Dependent Urbanisation**' (Castells, 1977; Gilbert