**Unit 6: Urban Geography**

**Key Terms**

Synekism Social Stratification

Urban Morphology Functional Zonation

Rank-size Rule Primate City

Zone Central City

Shantytowns Disamenity Sector

Redlining Blockbusting

Commercialization Gentrification

Teardowns McMansions

Urban Sprawl New Urbanism

Global City Spaces of Consumption

**Key Concepts**

Central Business District (CBD), Central City, Suburban Area, Metropolitan Statistical Area

Rural v Urban Settlements

Squatter Settlements

The Central Place Theory, Hinterland, Range, Threshold, Market Area, Friction of Distance

Gravity Model, Multiplier Effect

Primate City Rule, Rank-Size Rule

Urban City Models (All)

Public v Private Transit (US, Europe, Asia)

Urban Layouts (Europe, N. America, Developing World)

Locations of Major Urban Settlements, Mega Cities, Global Cities, Megalopolis

Suburbs (layout & characteristics) Suburbanization

Bid-Rent Curve

New Urbanism/Urban Renewal, Smart Growth, Gentrification

Blockbusting, Annexation, Redlining, Filtering

Counterurbanization

**Key Content**

Most people in developed countries work in such places as shops, offices, restaurants, universities, and hospitals. These are examples of the tertiary, or service, sector of the economy. A **service** is any activity that fulfills a human want or need and returns money to those who provide it.

A **settlement** is a permanent collection of buildings where people reside, work, and obtain services. They occupy a very small percentage of Earth’s surface, well under 1 percent, but most people live in settlements as few choose to reside in isolation.

**Three Types of Services** The service sector of the economy is subdivided into three types: consumer services, business services, and public services. Each of these sectors is divided into several major sub sectors:

* **Consumer Services** provide services to individual consumers who desire them and can afford to pay for them. Nearly half of all jobs in the United States are in consumer services. Four main types of consumer services are retail and wholesale services, leisure and hospitality services, health and social services, and education.
* **Business Services** help facilitate the activities of other businesses. One-fourth of all jobs in the United States are in business services. The three main types of business services are transportation and information services, professional services, and financial services.
* **Public Services** provide security and protection for citizens and businesses. About 10 percent of all U.S. jobs are in the public sector. Excluding educators, one-sixth of public-sector employees work for the federal government, one-fourth for one of the 50 state governments, and three-fifths for one of the tens of thousands of local governments.

The concept of **Central Place Theory** helps to explain how the most profitable location can be identified. Central place theory was first proposed by German geographer Walter Christaller in the 1930s, based on his studies in southern Germany. *(See the Models Review and the Lecture Slideshow for a visual)*

A **central place** is a market center for the exchange of goods and services by people attracted from the surrounding area. The central place is so called because it is centrally located to maximize accessibility. Businesses in central places compete against each other to serve as markets for goods and services for the surrounding region.

The area surrounding a service from which customers are attracted is the **market area** or **hinterland**.

The **Range of a Service** is the maximum distance people are willing to travel to use a service. People are willing to go only a short distance for everyday consumer services, such as groceries and pharmacies. But they will travel longer distances for other services such as a concert or professional ball game. As a rule, people tend to go to the nearest available service. Therefore, the range of a service must be determined from the radius of a circle that is irregularly shaped rather than perfectly round.

**Threshold of a Service** The **threshold** of a service is the minimum number of people needed to support the service. Every enterprise has a minimum number of customers required to generate enough sales to make a profit.

In many developed countries, geographers observe that ranking settlements from largest to smallest (population) produces a regular pattern. This is called the **Rank-Size Rule**, in which the country’s *n*th-largest settlement is 1/*n* the population of the largest settlement. The second-largest city is one-half the size of the largest, the fourth-largest city is one-fourth the size of the largest, and so on. When plotted, the rank-size distribution forms a fairly straight line.

If a country does not follow the rank-size rule, it may follow the **Primate City Rule**. A country’s largest city is called the **primate city**. If a country follows the primate city rule it means that the country’s largest settlement has more than twice as many people as the second-ranking settlement. The absence of rank-size distribution in many developing countries indicates that there is not enough wealth in the society to pay full variety of services. The absence of a rank-size distribution constitutes a hardship for people who must travel long distances to reach an urban settlement with shops and such services as hospitals.

The **gravity model** predicts that the optimal location of a service is directly related to the number of people in an area and inversely related to the distance people must travel to access it. The best location will be the one that minimizes the distances that all potential customers must travel to reach the service.

**Business Services in Global Cities** Global cities are most closely integrated into the global economic system because they are at the center of the flow of information and capital. Business services (including financial institutions, headquarters of large corporations, and lawyers, accountants, and other professional services) concentrate in disproportionately large numbers in global cities.

**Ranking Global Cities** Global cities are divided into three levels: alpha, beta, and gamma. A combination of economic, political, cultural, infrastructure, communications, and transportation factors are used to identify global cities and to distinguish among the various ranks.

**Consumer and Public Services in Global Cities** Because of their large size, global cities have retail services with extensive market areas. A disproportionately large number of wealthy people live in global cities, so luxury and highly specialized products are especially likely to be sold there. Global cities are also centers of national and international political power.

**Business Services in Developing Countries** In the global economy, developing countries specialize in two distinctive types of business services: offshore financial services and back-office functions. These businesses are typically located in developing countries for a number of reasons, including the presence of supportive laws, weak regulations, and low-wage workers.

**Economic Base** The economic activities in a settlement can be divided into two types: basic and nonbasic businesses. A settlement’s distinctive economic structure derives from its **basic industries**, which export primarily to consumers outside the settlement. **Nonbasic industries** are enterprises whose customers live in the same community. A community’s unique collection of basic industries defines its **economic base**.

**Services in Rural Settlements** Rural settlements are either clustered or dispersed. A **clustered rural settlement** is an agricultural-based community in which a number of families live in close proximity to each other, with fields surrounding the collection of houses and farm buildings. A **dispersed rural settlement** is characterized by farmers living on individual farms isolated from neighbors rather than alongside other farmers in settlements.

The process by which the populations of urban settlements grow is known as **urbanization**. Urbanization has two dimensions: an increase in the *percentage* of people living in urban settlements and an increase in the *number* of people living in urban settlements. These two factors have different global distributions and occur for different reasons.

**Differences Between Urban and Rural Settlements** A century ago, social scientists observed striking differences between urban and rural residents. An urban dweller follows a different way of life than a rural dweller. These urban settlements differentiated from rural areas by their large size, high population density, and socially heterogeneous people. These characteristics produced differences in the social behavior of urban and rural residents.

**Percentage in Urban Settlements** The percentage of the world’s population living in urban settlements has increased rapidly, from 3 percent in 1800 to 6 percent in 1850, 14 percent in 1900, 30 percent in 1950, and 45 percent in 2000. The population of Earth’s urban settlements exceeded that of rural settlements for the first time in human history around 2008. The percentage of people living in urban settlements mirrors a country’s level of development. In developed countries, 77 percent live in urban areas, compared to 48 percent in developing countries. The gap in urbanization between developed and developing countries is closing rapidly.

**Site of Urban Settlements** Developed countries have a higher percentage of urban residents, but developing countries have more of the very large urban settlements. Seven of the 10 most populous cities are in developing countries: Jakarta, Delhi, Manila, Shanghai, Karachi, Beijing, and Guangzhou. All but 3 of the 100 fastest-growing urban settlements are in developing countries. Five of the 13 growing at more than 4 percent per year are in Africa, 3 are in India, 4 are elsewhere in Asia, and 1 is in Latin America. The three exceptions are in the United States: Atlanta, Austin, and Las Vegas are among the top 100 fastest-growing urban settlements. In developing countries, migration from the countryside is fueling half of the increase in population in urban settlements, even though job opportunities may be scarce.

**Chapter 13: Urban Patterns**

Historically, urban settlements were very small and compact. As these settlements have rapidly increased in size, however, definitions have been created to describe their different parts: the central city, the urban area, and the metropolitan area. A **central city** (or simply **city**) is an urban settlement that has been legally incorporated into an independent, self-governing unit known as a municipality. Virtually all countries have a local government system that recognizes cities as legal entities with defined boundaries.

**Urban Area** An **urban area** consists of a central city and its surrounding built-up suburbs. The U.S. census recognizes two types of urban areas. The **urbanized area** is an urban area with at least 50,000 inhabitants. An **urban cluster** is an urban area with between 2,500 and 50,000 inhabitants.

The U.S. Bureau of the Census has created a method of measuring the larger functional area of a settlement, known as the **metropolitan statistical area (MSA)**. An MSA includes an urbanized area with a population of at least 50,000, the county within which the city is located, and adjacent counties with a high population density and a large percentage of residents working in the central city’s county.

The census has also designated smaller urban areas as **micropolitan statistical areas (μSAs)**. A μSA includes an urbanized area of between 10,000 and 50,000 inhabitants, the county in which it is located, and adjacent counties tied to the city. The census combines MSAs and μSAs in several ways.

**The Central Business District (CBD)** is the core of the city where many services cluster. Services are attracted to the CBD because of its accessibility. The CBD is usually near the original site of settlement. The CBDs of older cities are often situated along a body of water. Businesses and Services located within a CBD typically include: ***city hall, courts, county and state agencies, libraries, advertising, banking, journalism, law, high-end and specialty shopping, restaurants, museums, colleges, parks, theatres, and sports arenas.***

**Activities Excluded from the CBD** High rents and land shortage discourage two principal activities in the CBD – industrial and residential.

**The Underground CBD** A vast underground network exists beneath most CBDs. The typical “underground city” includes garages, loading docks for deliveries to offices and shops, electric and telephone wires, and pipes for water and sewer service. Subway trains run beneath the streets of large CBDs.

**Skyscrapers** Skyscrapers develop to maximize the floor space in the highest-demand areas. Downtown skyscrapers give a city one of its most distinctive images and unifying symbols.

**CBDs outside North America** Outside of North America, CBDs are less likely to be dominated by commercial services. They instead feature religious or historical structures and parks. CBDs outside of North America are also more likely to have residents.

**Models of Urban Structure** Sociologists, economists, and geographers have developed three models to help explain where different types of people tend to live in an urban area – ***the concentric zone, sector, and multiple nuclei models. The peripheral model is a modification of the multiple nuclei model.*** The three models have been applied to cities in the United States and in other countries with varying levels of success. The three models describing the internal social structure of cities were developed in Chicago. In the developing world, ***the Latin American, African, and Southeast Asian City Models*** are used. *(See the Models Review and the Lecture Slideshows for visuals of these models)*

**Limitations of the Models** None of the three models taken individually completely explains why different types of people live in distinctive parts of a city. Critics view the models as too simple and fail to consider the variety of reasons that lead people to select particular residential locations. Because the three models are all based on conditions that existed in U.S. cities between the two world wars, critics also question their relevance to contemporary urban patterns in the United States or in other countries.

**Applying the Models in Europe** American urban areas differ from those elsewhere in the world. These differences do not invalidate the three models of internal urban structure, but they do point out that social groups in other countries may not have the same reasons for selecting particular neighborhoods within their cities.

**The Three Models in Europe** The urban structure in Paris can be used to illustrate similarities and differences in the distribution of people in U.S. and European cities:

* Concentric Zones. As in U.S. urban areas, the newer housing in the Paris region is in outer rings, and the older housing is closer to the center. Unlike in U.S. urban areas, though, much of the newer suburban housing is in high-rise apartments rather than single-family homes.
* Sectors. Again, as in U.S. urban areas, higher-income people cluster in a sector in the Paris region. The wealthy lived near the royal palace beginning in the twelfth century and the Palace of Versailles from the sixteenth century until the French Revolution in 1789.
* Multiple Nuclei. European urban areas, including Paris, have experienced a large increase in immigration from other regions of the world. In contrast to U.S. urban areas, most ethnic and racial minorities reside in the suburbs of Paris.

A **suburb** is a residential or commercial area situated within an urban area but outside the central city. Suburbs have existed on a small scale since ancient times; residential areas were often located outside the walls surrounding a city. As cities grew rapidly during the nineteenth century, as part of the Industrial Revolution, more extensive suburbs appeared.

**Smart Growth** has been used in some U.S. cities to limit sprawl. Smart Growth is legislation and regulations to limit suburban growth and preserve farmland.

**Sprawl** is the development of suburbs at relatively low density and at locations that are not contiguous to the existing built-up area. When private developers select new housing sites, they seek cheap land that can easily be prepared for construction – land often contiguous to the existing built-up area.

**Overlapping Metropolitan Areas** In the northeastern United States, large metropolitan areas are so close together that they now form one continuous urban complex, extending north of Boston to south of Washington, D.C., this region is known as **Megalopolis**. Other continuous urban complexes exist in the United States—the southern Great Lakes between Chicago and Milwaukee on the west and Pittsburgh on the east, and southern California from Los Angeles to Tijuana.

**Suburban Segregation** Many suburbs display two forms of segregation:

* Segregation of social classes. Housing in given suburban community is usually built for people of a single social class, with others excluded by virtue of the cost, size, or location of the housing. Segregation by race and ethnicity also persists in some suburbs.
* Segregation of land uses. Residents are separated from commercial and manufacturing activities that are confined to compact, distinct areas.

**U.S. and U.K. Suburbs** The supply of land for the construction of new housing is more severely restricted in European urban areas than in the United States. Officials try to limit sprawl by designating areas of mandatory open space. Several British cities are surrounded by greenbelts, or rings of open space. New housing is built either in older suburbs inside the greenbelts or in planned extensions to small towns and new towns beyond the greenbelts.

**Reliance on Motor Vehicles** The average American travels 36 miles per day. In urban areas, public transport is better suited than motor vehicles to moving large numbers of people because each transit traveler takes up far less space. Public transport is cheaper, less polluting, and more energy efficient than privately owned motor vehicles. Nonetheless, 83 percent of trips in the United States are by car or truck, 12 percent are by walking or biking, 2 percent each are by public transport or school bus, and 1 percent is by other means.

**Transportation Epochs** Transportation improvements have played a crucial role in the changing structure of urban areas. Geographer John Borchert identified five eras of U.S. urban areas resulting from changing transportation systems:

* Sail-Wagon Epoch (1790-1830)
* Iron Horse Epoch (1830-1870)
* Steel Rail Epoch (1870-1920)
* Auto-Air-Amenity Epoch (1920-1970)
* Satellite-Electronic Jet Propulsion (1970-?)

**Autonomous Driving Vehicles** Future transportation systems are likely to include various forms of autonomous vehicles. Vehicles currently possess technological capabilities supportive of hands-free driving, such as sensors and GPS, and they can perform hands-free functions, such as automatic braking, parallel parking, and prevention of unsafe lane changes. Autonomous vehicles are likely to result in fewer accidents caused by human error, provide mobility for people who are too young to drive or have a disability, and decrease the safe distance between vehicles and therefore increase the number of vehicles that can fit on a road. Still unsettled are many practical problems created by autonomous vehicles, such as liability and insurance.

**The City Challenged** One hundred years ago, low-income inner-city neighborhoods in the United States teemed with throngs of recent immigrants from Europe. Such neighborhoods that housed perhaps 100,000 a century ago may contain fewer than 5,000 inhabitants today. Those remaining may face significant challenges, distinct from those faced by suburban inhabitants.

The **underclass** is a group in society prevented from participating in the material benefits of a more developed society because of a variety of social and economic hardships. A disproportionately large share of the underclass live in inner-city neighborhoods, where they are trapped in an unending cycle of hardships. Inadequate job skills, a culture of poverty, homelessness, the presence of drugs, crime, inadequate social and consumer services, and municipal finances that cannot meet budgetary needs due to low tax revenues are some of the issues the underclass deal with in this environment.

Large houses built by wealthy families in the nineteenth century are subdivided by absentee landlords into smaller dwellings for low-income families. This process of subdivision of houses by successive waves of lower-income people is known as **filtering**.

Some banks engage in **redlining**—drawing lines on a map to identify areas in which they will refuse to loan money.

The process of converting an urban neighborhood from a predominantly low-income, renter-occupied area to a predominantly middle-class, owner-occupied area is known as **gentrification**. Most cities have at least one substantially renovated inner-city neighborhood that has attracted higher-income residents.

**The City Contrasted** Contemporary American cities display ever-sharper contrasts. In some places, young, white, and wealthy people are moving back into the city. In other places, cities face significant problems.

**The City Cleaned** According to the United Nations, **sustainable development** is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The future sustainability of cities depends largely on how we structure our future transport. U.S. scientists working with the U.N. devised a strategy with three key elements to promote sustainable changes in future transportation.

* Sharp decrease in the use of the three fossil fuels.
* Increase in the use of renewable energy.
* Use of **carbon capture and storage (CCS)**, which involves capturing waste CO2, transporting it to a storage site, and depositing it where it will not enter the atmosphere.