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Urban Migration Trends, Challenges, Responses and Policy in the Asia–Pacific

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
DEFINING URBAN AREAS IN THE ASIA–PACIFIC.....	5
THE PACE AND SCALE OF URBANIZATION	7
DRIVERS OF URBANIZATION AND URBAN GROWTH	18
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND ASIA–PACIFIC URBAN DEVELOPMENT	22
MIGRATION, URBANIZATION AND POVERTY IN ASIA–PACIFIC.....	25
CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES.....	29
Introduction.....	29
Housing and Living Conditions.....	29
Health	33
Food Security	35
Crime	38
Work and the City – Men and Women	39
Social Inclusion, Wellbeing and Protection.....	41
The Demographic Dividend	44
POLICIES REGARDING URBANIZATION AND MIGRATION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC	48
CONCLUSION	51
REFERENCES.....	53

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Comparison of the Philippines and Thailand: Development Indicators and Level of Urbanization	6
Table 2:	Asia and the Pacific: Urban Population, Number and Percentage Estimates, 1950 to 2010 and Projected, 2030.....	11
Table 3:	Population of Cities with 10 million Inhabitants or more, 1950, 2001, 2014 and 2030.....	12
Table 4:	Distribution of Urban Population in Developing Countries by Size of Urban Area	16
Table 5:	A Simple Typology of Migration to Asia-Pacific Cities	19
Table 6:	Contribution of Net Migration to Population Change in Asian Megacities, 1990–2000 (%)	19
Table 7:	Poverty rates are falling in both urban and rural areas but are lower in urban areas (share of the population earning below USD 1.25 a day)	26
Table 8:	Vulnerability Indicators in Indonesia, Philippines, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam.....	32
Table 9:	Numbers of Rural Migrants in China, 2008–2013	42
Table 10:	China: Per cent of Outmigrant (rural hukou) Workers covered by Government Social Welfare Schemes, 2008–2013	43
Table 11:	Selected Asia-Pacific Countries: Differences in Total Fertility Rate Between Urban and Rural Areas	45
Table 12:	Change of Age Structure in Shanghai (Per cent)	47

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1:	Selected Regions: Percentage of the Population in Urban Areas, actual 1950 to 2010 and projected 2015 to 2050	7
Figure 2:	Asia and the Pacific: Percentage Urban by Country, 1950, 2014 and 2050	8
Figure 3:	Asia and the Pacific: Urban and Rural Population by Region, 1950–2050	10
Figure 4:	Distribution of Cities in Asia with more than two million Inhabitants in 2011	14
Figure 5:	Distribution of Cities in the Pacific with more than 10,000 Inhabitants in 2014	15
Figure 6:	Countries with highest Urban Populations living in the Low-elevation Coastal Zones, 2000	17
Figure 7:	Asia–Pacific: Level of Urbanization, 2014 and GDP per capita, 2013	25
Figure 8:	India and Viet Nam: Poverty in Urban and Rural Areas	27
Figure 9:	Most unequal Cities (income-based Gini): Selected Cities in the Developing World, 1993–2008	28
Figure 10:	The Range in Local Government Expenditure per person per year	30
Figure 11:	Proportion of Urban Population living in Slums, 1990–2010	31
Figure 12:	Prevalence of Undernourishment, Asia and the Pacific, 1990–92, 2000–02 and 2010–12, by Region	36
Figure 13:	Prevalence of Undernourishment, Asia and the Pacific, 1990–92 and 2010–12, by Country	37
Figure 14:	Depth of Food Deficit, Asia and the Pacific, 1990–92, 2000–02 and 2010–12	38
Figure 15:	China: Number of Urban and Rural Workers and Participation in the Old Age Pension Scheme, 1990–2013	43
Figure 16:	China: Total Fertility Rate, 1950–2010	46

INTRODUCTION

In the rapid social and economic transformation which has swept Asia and the Pacific¹ in recent decades one of the most significant causes and consequences of the change has been a transition from predominantly rural to urban societies. In 1970, 23 per cent of the Asia-Pacific population was living in urban areas but the latest estimates (UN DESA, 2014b) indicate that some 46.5 per cent now live in urban areas. This represents not only a profound change in population distribution but also in the way people live, work and interact. Since it is such a diverse and vast region, the extent and rate of urbanization has varied between countries and regions but rapid urbanization has been inextricably linked with those areas with the most rapidly growing economies. This paper examines recent patterns of urbanization and urban growth in the Asia-Pacific. In doing this, it relies upon demographic data from national censuses and that compiled by UN DESA (2014b). Accordingly, at the outset, some important warnings need to be noted about differentiating between urban and rural areas with the criteria used varying widely between countries. An analysis is then made of changing levels of urbanization across the region and a simple attempt to relate it to the level of development. A common misconception regarding urbanization in the region is that it involves a simple redistribution of people from living in rural to living in urban areas. It is demonstrated here that the process is a much more complex one involving a mix of migration and mobility strategies as well as elements such as *in situ* urbanization and natural population increase. The challenges and opportunities which this presents for the region are considered.

DEFINING URBAN AREAS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC

There is little argument that the rural/urban divide is a most significant economic and social distinction in the Asia-Pacific. However, the reality is that over recent decades there has been a blurring of the distinction between rural and urban areas and population. This derives from two major considerations which have led to considerable debate as to the extent to which official urban population figures accurately depict the actual reality (Jones and Douglass, 2008; Zhu, 1999):

- (a) The failure of boundaries of urban areas (especially the megacities) to reflect accurately either the extent of built-up areas or the functional urban or metropolitan areas that constitutes their effective labour market (Champion and Hugo [eds.], 2003). These boundaries tend to go beyond urban centres. Significant underestimates of urban, especially metropolitan, populations occur which rapidly expand laterally and swallow up adjacent urban areas.
- (b) The fact that there are millions of residents of China and some other Asian countries whose official residence is in rural areas or small towns where their families reside full-time but who earn much of their living and spend most of their lives in large cities through circular migration or commuting strategies. This means that official urban populations understate the functional urban populations (Hugo, 1978, 1982; Jun, 2010; Tie, 2010).

The latter point is especially important. In most nations, especially the larger ones, one can distinguish between a permanently settled resident population and a temporarily present group of 'circular migrants' from the outside. Jones (2003: 118), in examining this issue, concludes that 'the recorded statistical increase in urbanization fails to capture what has really been going on. The key point here is that the United Nations and data in most countries in Asia considerably underestimate the scale and impact of urbanization because they define urban in traditional terms which fail to take account of the 'new mobility in Asia'.

1 Asia and the Pacific are defined here using the United Nations classification, which includes Eastern, Southeast and Southern Asia and Oceania but excludes the Central and Western Asia regions.

A second definitional issue to bear in mind relates to the massive differences between Asia–Pacific nations in the ways in which they define urban areas. Many countries simply use an administrative boundary which may or may not coincide with intrinsically urban populations and built-up urban areas. Others use more functional definitions based on population density, income, type of economic activity, availability of facilities, etc. Jones (ibid.: 115–116) demonstrates the impact of this factor by comparing the Philippines and Thailand. An updated version of his table is provided in Table 1. He shows that, due to the quite different urban definitions used in the censuses of the two countries, there has been a massive underestimation of Thai urban populations and an exaggeration of those of the Philippines.

‘Not only is the excess in percentage urban in the Philippines compared with Thailand widening over time, but this has been happening at a time when Thailand’s economic development was running rapidly ahead of that in the Philippines ... the widening in the differential in percentage urban is precisely the opposite of what might have been expected on the basis of the usual correlation between economic development and urbanization.’

Table 1: Comparison of the Philippines and Thailand: Development Indicators and Level of Urbanization

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2014
Per capita income (USD)						
Philippines	295	410	690	730	1040	2765
Thailand	200	380	670	1570	2010	5779
% Male employment in agriculture						
Philippines	59	57	62	53	47	39
Thailand	78	75	72	64	*56	41
% Urban						
Philippines	30.3	33.0	37.5	48.8	58.6	44.5
Thailand	12.5	13.3	17.0	18.7	31.1	49.2
Difference in % urban	17.8	19.7	20.5	30.1	27.3	4.7

Source: Jones, 2003; United Nations DESA, 2014b; World Bank, 2014, World Development Indicators, online data.

Notes: Per capita income for 1970 is actually 1976, for 1990 actually 1991 and for 2014 actually 2013.

* Both males and females

Accordingly, some care needs to be exercised in interpretation of the trends in urban growth and urbanization in Asia which are described below.

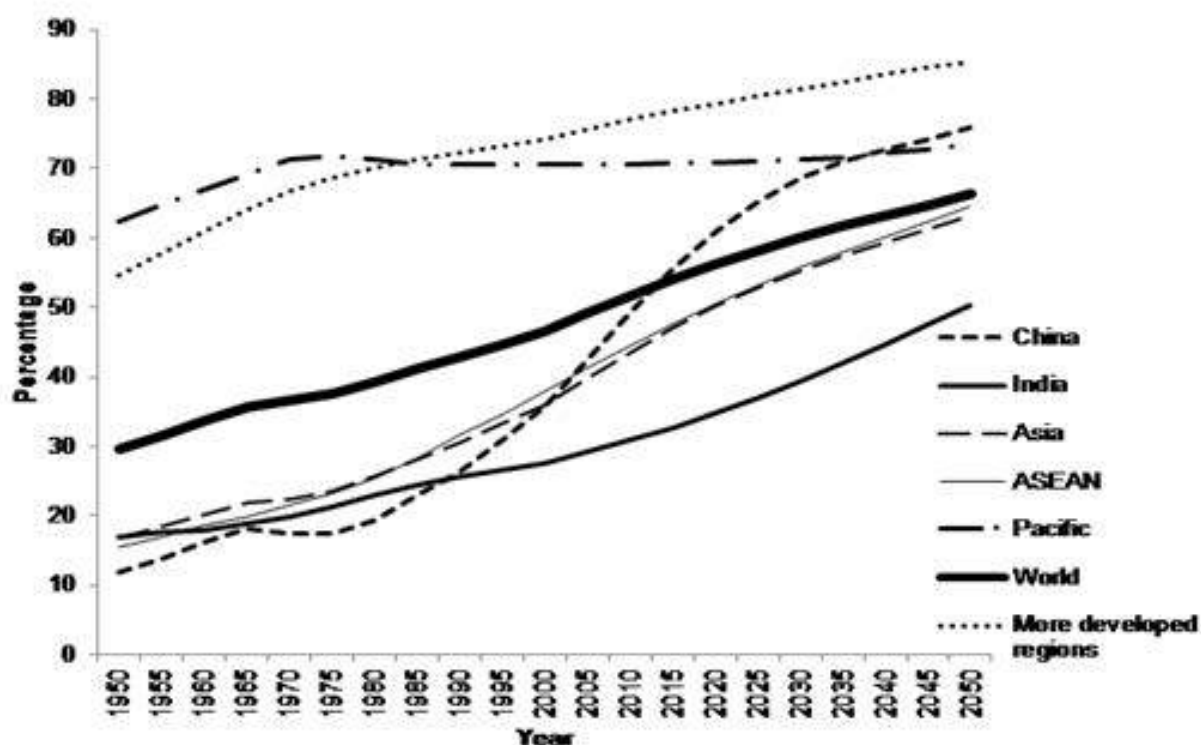
These definitional issues are especially important when considering Asia’s megacities. Much attention has been focused on the emergence of megacities in Asia – urban agglomerations with 10 million or more residents. They are complex cities of a scale and complexity not previously seen, often multinuclear in that they have enveloped smaller cities in their lateral spread. A key feature of Asian megacities is the fact that they include extensive peri-urban regions of mixed urban and rural land use but which are heavily tied to the urban area by commuting and other linkages (Jones, 2003). However, UN data on megacities usually apply to areas defined by city boundaries but in megacities the built-up area usually overflows those boundaries and the definition also excludes the large peri-urban development. A decade ago, while the United Nations gave the Jakarta megacity population at 11.4 million, the real functioning population at that time was 20.2 million. Jones and Douglass (2008) have demonstrated this systematic underestimation of the size of Asian megacities in censuses and in the United Nations figures. The concept of the megacity has challenged traditional methods of defining the boundaries of urban areas. Hence, although UN DESA (2014b) predicts a slowdown in the growth rate of Asian megacity populations over the next 15 years, these rates and the population sizes for several countries have to be questioned. The

significance of 'mega-urban' regions in the world is seen from the fact that Jones (2002: 121) estimated that a decade ago 11 per cent of the total population of Southeast Asia were living in such regions.

THE PACE AND SCALE OF URBANIZATION

In examining the rural-to-urban transition there are two key dimensions which need to be considered. *Urbanization* is defined as the *percentage* of the national population living in urban areas. In the Asian context, however, it is also important to examine the second dimension – *urban growth*. This refers to the *numbers* of national citizens living in urban areas; in Asia there has been a massive growth in the numbers living in urban areas while in several countries rural populations have begun to decline.

Figure 1: Selected Regions: Percentage of the Population in Urban Areas, actual 1950 to 2010 and projected 2015 to 2050

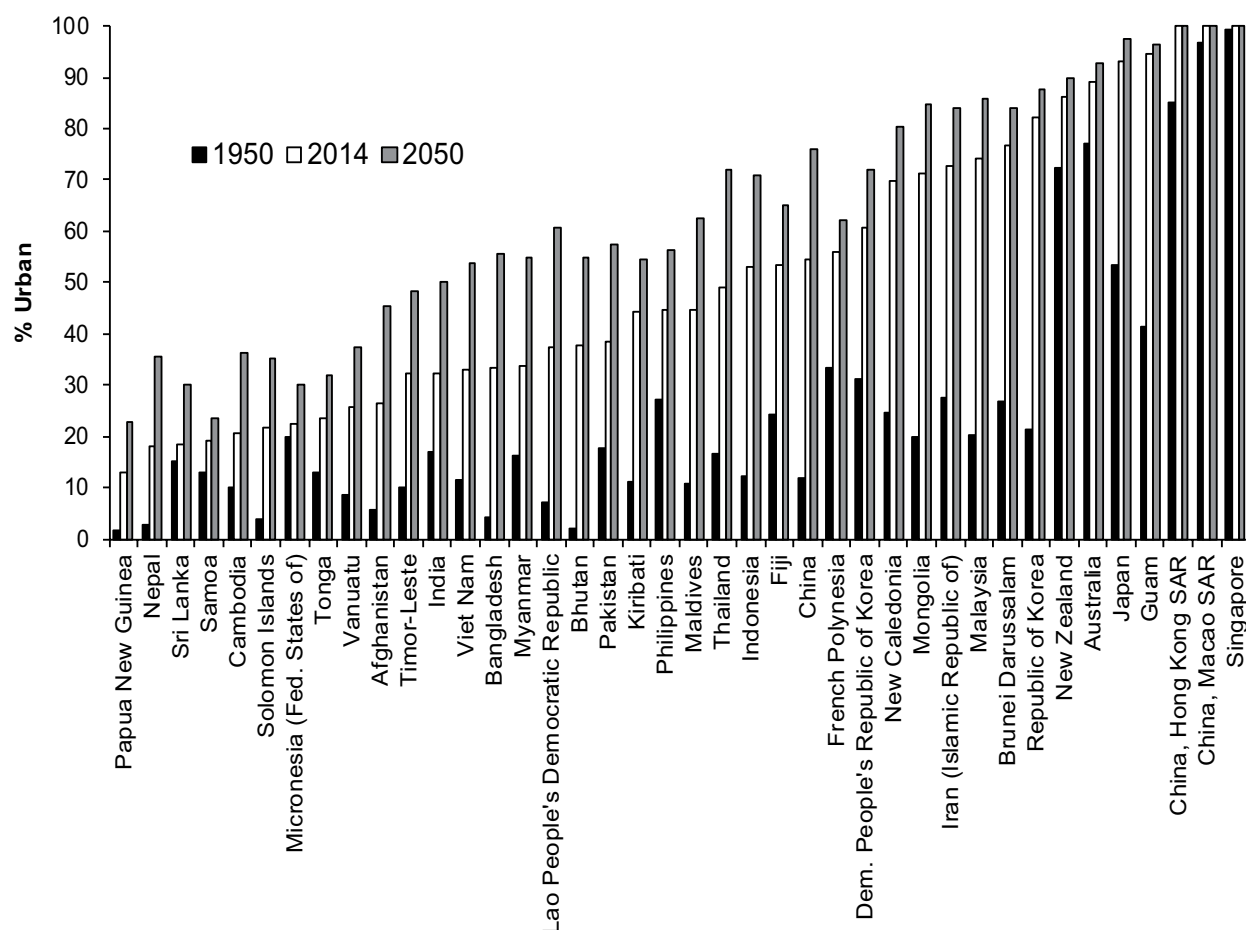


Source: UN DESA, 2014b.

The tempo of *urbanization* in Asia since 1950 and projected through to 2050 is presented in Figure 1 which also shows patterns for some key Asian countries as well as global patterns. Notwithstanding the data issues, this shows that there has been a large increase in the proportion of Asians living in urban areas with the 50 per cent threshold already passed. In the Pacific, Micronesia has 68.1 per cent of its population living in urban areas but less than half are urban in Polynesia (42.4%) and in Melanesia (18.4%). Most striking in Figure 1, however, is China. In 1950, China had the lowest level of urbanization of all the jurisdictions shown in the diagram. However, it increased rapidly during the 1990s and 2000s and is projected to continue at the same rate so that by 2050 it will be approaching the level of urbanization in more developed countries. India, on the other hand, had higher levels of urbanization than China up to 1985 but subsequently experienced a more modest growth although the UN DESA projections suggest there will be an increase in tempo over the next three decades. The patterns for ASEAN countries are also

given in Figure 1 and show a strong consistent pattern over the 100-year period in question which will see their level of urbanization increase from 15 to over 60 per cent by 2050.

Figure 2: Asia and the Pacific: Percentage Urban by Country, 1950, 2014 and 2050

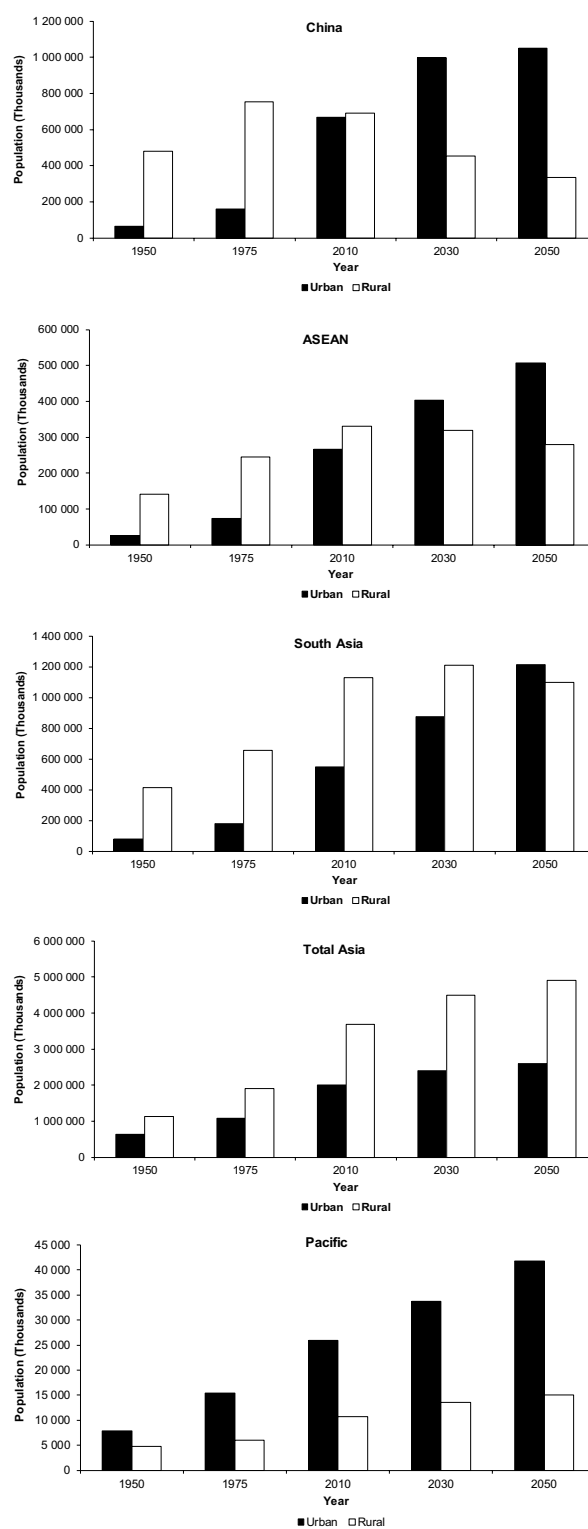


Source: UN DESA, 2014b.

Figure 2 shows the levels of urbanization for individual countries over the 1950–2050 period and some variations from the rapid urbanization shown for regions in Figure 1 are apparent; however, in some areas, there are clearly some definitional issues. At one end, the city states of Hong Kong and Macau, China and Singapore represent one extreme but there are a number of countries with less than a third of their population in urban areas at the current time (2014). Sri Lanka, with 18.3 per cent urban, is clearly a case with an urban definition which fails to include its functional urban population. However, most of these countries have low incomes and are lagging in development compared with many Asian countries. Several of these nations have suffered prolonged conflicts which clearly have delayed development and urbanization such as Cambodia (20.5%), Afghanistan (26.3%), Timor-Leste (32.1%) and Viet Nam (33.0%). However, some of the poorest countries in Asia are included here – Nepal (18.2%), Bangladesh (33.5%) and Myanmar (33.6%). Urbanization in the Pacific is distinctive with most migrants living in informal settlements which accommodate only 2.1 million of the region's total population. However, it is increasing very quickly with projections of 5.5 million in 2050.

It is notable in Figure 2, however, that many Asian countries passed the 50 per cent threshold in 2014 whereby the majority of their populations lived in urban areas. This of course includes the ‘tiger’ nations of the 1980s and 1990s but also some of the largest nations in the region (China [54.4%] and Indonesia [53.0%]). The Thailand/Philippines anomaly noted by Jones (2003) is still in evidence. A strong pattern is apparent of lower urbanization in South Asia than in East Asia, with Southeast Asia lying in between. Low levels of urbanization in 2014 were evident in each South Asian nation – India (32.4%), Pakistan (38.3%) and Bangladesh (33.5%).

Much of the discussion on the urban transition in Asia examines only the percentage of national populations living in urban areas but it is important also to focus on the number of people involved since this gives a more striking perspective of the challenges being faced in urban Asia, especially in the largest cities. Accordingly, Figure 3 shows changes (actual and predicted) in the size of rural and urban populations in key Asian regions for the period 1950–2050. Not only in 1950 but still in 1975, Asia was overwhelmingly a rural society and economy with rural populations being clearly dominant. Thereafter there have been dramatic changes with exponential growth of urban populations and a concomitant decline in rural population, although timing has differed between different regions.

Figure 3: Asia and the Pacific: Urban and Rural Population by Region, 1950–2050

Source: UN DESA, 2014b.

Table 2 shows that Southern Asia is the least urbanized part of the Asian region with less than a third (32.7%) of its population living in urban areas while Eastern Asia is the most urbanized (54.3%). By 2030, more than two in three residents in East Asia will live in urban areas while the urban proportion will be 42 per cent in Southern Asia and 55.8 per cent in Southeast Asia. Despite rapid urban growth, the Pacific will be less than half urban.

Table 2: Asia and the Pacific: Urban Population, Number and Percentage Estimates, 1950 to 2010 and Projected, 2030

Region	1950		2000		2010		2030	
	No ('000)	%	No ('000)	%	No ('000)	%	No ('000)	%
Eastern Asia	119 111	17.9	632 396	42.0	865 826	54.3	1 207 794	71.5
Southern Asia	78 950	16.0	420 685	29.1	550 607	32.7	875 188	42.0
Southeast Asia	26 066	15.5	199 681	38.1	265 801	44.5	403 284	55.8
Asia	224 127	16.9	1 252 762	34.9	1 682 233	43.5	2 486 267	55.3
Australia/New Zealand	7 681	76.2	20 093	86.9	23 644	88.3	30 385	90.6
Melanesia	123	5.6	1 334	19.1	1 668	19.1	2 622	21.1
Micronesia	47	31.6	325	65.6	329	66.0	411	68.4
Polynesia	56	23.0	261	42.7	283	42.8	329	43.4
Pacific	7 906	62.4	22 013	70.5	25 924	70.7	33 747	71.3

Source: UN DESA, 2014b.

One of the major distinctive features of urbanization in Asia has been, as indicated earlier, the emergence of megacities with more than 10 million inhabitants. They play not only a very important focal role for internal migration from the national hinterland but also a mega 'gateway' role as the point of entry for international migrants. Indeed, these same cities played this distinctive role in colonial times (McGee, 1967). Putting aside the definition problems of megacities, Table 3 shows the past, current and future global situation according to UN DESA calculations. Only one such agglomeration was located in Asia in 1950 but, by 2001, 10 of the 18 global megacities were Asian. In 2014, there were 28 world megacities, of which 16 were in Asia. In this same year, some 12 per cent of the world's urban dwellers lived in megacities (UN DESA, 2014c:1). Projections of world megacities in 2030 predict that the seven largest megacities will be in Asia, from Tokyo (37.2 million) to Karachi (24.8 million). Of the 42 countries with more than 10 million inhabitants, 23 will be Asian.

However, the poor measurement of Asian city size means that these figures substantially underestimate both the total number of Asian megacities and their size. Jones and Douglass (2008) have demonstrated that several ASEAN coastal capitals have indeed passed the 10 million resident threshold (Jakarta, Bangkok, Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh [Ho Chi Minh City]). This undoubtedly is also the case for Chinese cities like Shenzhen, Chongqing and Guangzhou. These megacities are playing a major role in the development of China and ASEAN countries and it is crucial that we develop better ways of delineating their boundaries so they represent the functional mega-urban areas. The remarkable growth of Chinese cities, especially, has not been well captured in these data. One striking example is the city of Shenzhen located on the border of the People's Republic of China with the SAR Hong Kong. From a population of 20,000 in 1980, it will have reached 12 million and megacity status within 40 years (Shen, 2008).

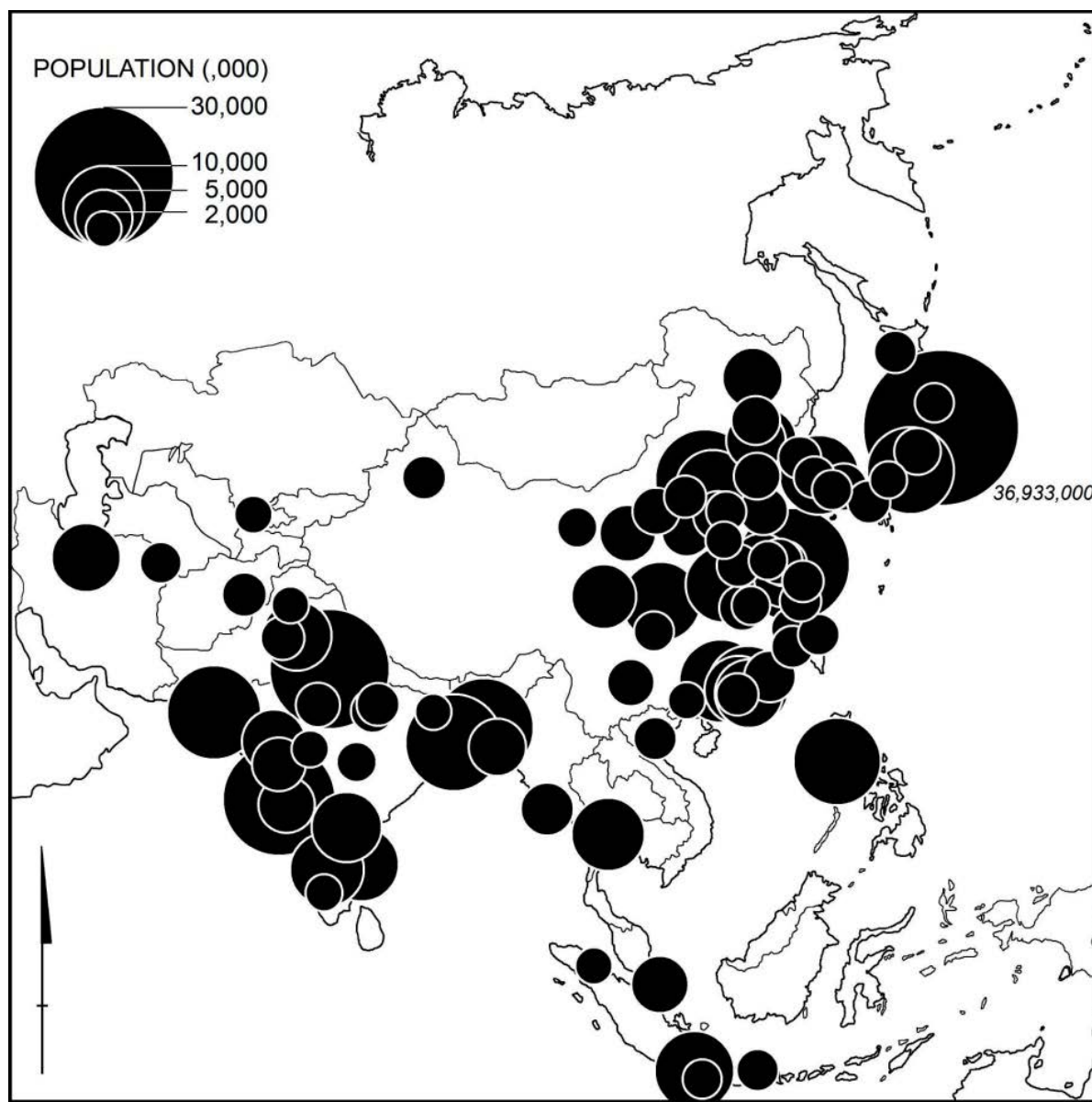
Table 3: Population of Cities with 10 million Inhabitants or more, 1950, 2001, 2014 and 2030

1950		2001		2014		2030	
City	Population ('000)	City	Population ('000)	City	Population ('000)	City	Population ('000)
New York-Newark	12 338	Tokyo	34 669	Tokyo	37 833	Tokyo	37 190
Tokyo	11 275	Kinki M.M.A. (Osaka)	18 662	Delhi	24 953	Delhi	36 060
		Ciudad de México (Mexico City)	18 618	Shanghai	22 991	Shanghai	30 751
		New York-Newark	17 868	Ciudad de México (Mexico City)	20 843	Mumbai (Bombay)	27 797
		São Paulo	17 260	São Paulo	20 831	Beijing	27 706
		Mumbai (Bombay)	16 753	Mumbai (Bombay)	20 741	Dhaka	27 374
		Delhi	16 412	Kinki M.M.A. (Osaka)	20 123	Karachi	24 838
		Shanghai	14 567	Beijing	19 520	Al-Qahirah (Cairo)	24 502
		Al-Qahirah (Cairo)	13 922	New York-Newark	18 591	Lagos	24 239
		Kolkata (Calcutta)	13 253	Al-Qahirah (Cairo)	18 419	Ciudad de México (Mexico City)	23 865
		Buenos Aires	12 621	Dhaka	16 982	São Paulo	23 444
		Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana	11 834	Karachi	16 126	Kinshasa	19 996
		Rio de Janeiro	11 415	Buenos Aires	15 024	Kinki M.M.A. (Osaka)	19 976
		Dhaka	10 696	Kolkata (Calcutta)	14 766	New York-Newark	19 885
		Beijing	10 626	Istanbul	13 954	Kolkata (Calcutta)	19 092
		Karachi	10 378	Chongqing	12 916	Guangzhou, Guangdong	17 574

Moskva (Moscow)	10 169	Rio de Janeiro	12 825	Chongqing	17 380
Manila	10 140	Manila	12 764	Buenos Aires	16 956
		Lagos	12 614	Manila	16 756
		Los Angeles- Long Beach- Santa Ana	12 308	Istanbul	16 694
		Moskva (Moscow)	12 063	Bangalore	14 762
		Guangzhou, Guangdong	11 843	Tianjin	14 655
		Kinshasa	11 116	Rio de Janeiro	14 174
		Tianjin	10 860	Chennai (Madras)	13 921
		Paris	10 764	Jakarta	13 812
		Shenzhen	10 680	Los Angeles- Long Beach- Santa Ana	13 257
		London	10 189	Lahore	13 033
		Jakarta	10 176	Hyderabad	12 774
				Shenzhen	12 673
				Lima	12 221
				Moskva (Moscow)	12 200
				Bogotá	11 966
				Paris	11 803
				Johannesburg	11 573
				Krung Thep (Bangkok)	11 528
				London	11 467
				Dar es Salaam	10 760
				Ahmadabad	10 527
				Luanda	10 429
				Thành Pho Ho Chí Minh (Ho Chi Minh City)	10 200
				Chengdu	10 104

The spatial distribution of cities with more than two million inhabitants in Asia is shown in Figure 4. There are a number of patterns which are evident. The map indicates the strong coastal orientation in the location of large cities, especially megacities. This is partly a function of the strong colonial heritage of these large coastal port cities (McGee, 1967). The lack of large cities in inland Asia is strongly in evidence. The East/West divide in China is also striking reflecting the strong spatial divide in development between the two parts of the nation. It contrasts with India where the distribution of large cities is more evenly spread through the national space. The lack of urban development in the poorest and least developed parts of Asia such as Eastern Indonesia, Laos and Cambodia is clearly evident.

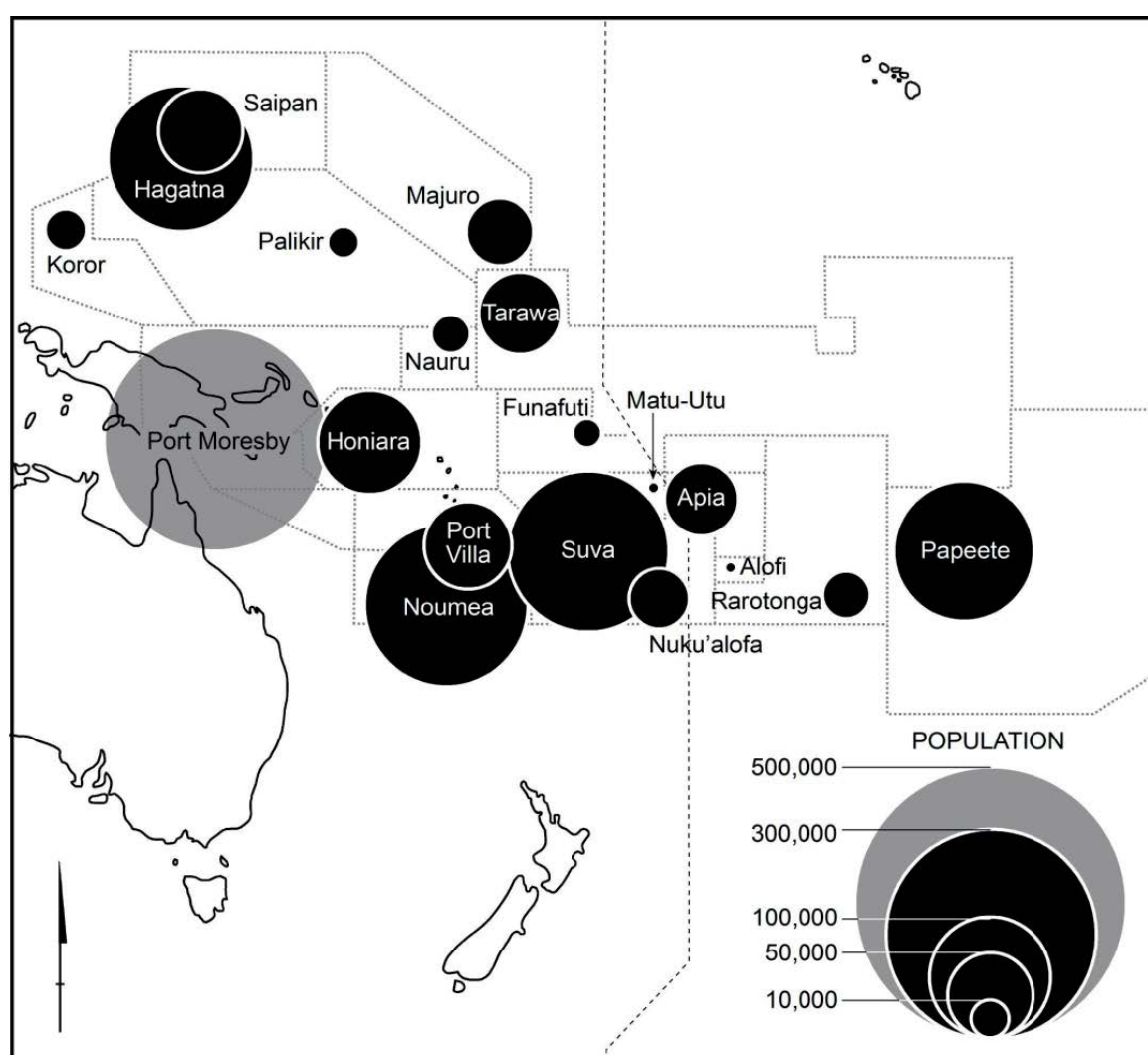
Figure 4: Distribution of Cities in Asia with more than two million Inhabitants in 2011



Source: UN DESA, 2012.

Pacific urbanization contrasts sharply with the pattern in Asia, although both regions share very rapidly increasing urbanization, urban growth with internal migration being the main driver. The spatial patterning of urban centres with more than 10,000 inhabitants in the Pacific is shown in Figure 5. Depicting the pattern of urban development across such a vast area with small islands is difficult. The sparse distribution of major cities compared with Asia is evident but also the size of cities (Asia – 2 million and above; the Pacific – 10,000 and above). At the turn of the century, only two cities had more than 100,000 inhabitants (Port Moresby and Suva). However, as Connell (2011) points out, the growth of such centres has been remarkable in the post-war period since these two cities had less than 25,000 inhabitants in the 1960s; Port Moresby has now probably around half a million and Suva half of this. However, size is not the only relevant criteria here.

Figure 5: Distribution of Cities in the Pacific with more than 10,000 Inhabitants in 2014



Source: UN DESA, 2014b.

‘Urbanisation is proportionately least in Melanesia – though towns and cities are larger – while urban growth is particularly significant in atoll states of Kiribati, Marshall Islands and Tuvalu, where economic development is absent (Connell, 2011: 122).’

The latter point is important in Asia as well as the Pacific. Much of the contemporary discourse on urbanization in Asia has focused on megacities. In recent years in discussions of urbanization, there has been a focus on megacities, yet it is apparent that small- and medium-sized cities are also making a major contribution to urban growth, especially in large nations like China, India and Indonesia. Smaller and medium-sized cities also are experiencing ‘extended urbanization’ in that they are expanding beyond their boundaries and creating what Zhu (2003) describes in China as ‘*in situ* urbanization’ whereby hitherto rural populations are ‘swallowed up’ by expanding urban areas. A study by Fahmi et al. (2014) examines Cirebon in Indonesia where the city has 300,000 inhabitants and an additional 400,000 live in the outer areas surrounding the city proper. There are real problems in providing services and infrastructure to such areas. Despite official underestimation of the size and growth of megacities, it is the medium-sized and smaller cities which are absorbing the bulk of urban growth and the majority of internal migrants in many Asian countries, especially the largest. This is apparent in Table 4 which indicates only one in ten urban residents in developing countries live in megacities but 51.3 per cent live in cities and towns with less than 500,000 residents. This neglect of medium-sized and small cities is unfortunate because:

- Incidence of poverty increases with decreasing city size (discussed later);
- Many of these cities are growing rapidly so have an increasing vulnerable recent migrant population;
- They often are neglected in resource allocation so city administrators have great difficulty meeting rapidly increasing demands on infrastructure and services.

Table 4: Distribution of Urban Population in Developing Countries by Size of Urban Area

City size class	Number of agglomerations			Population in urban areas (in 1,000s)			Percentage of urban population		
	1975	2005	2010	1975	2005	2010	1975	2005	2010
10 million or more	3	19	23	53,185	284,943	352,465	3.5	8.9	9.9
5 to 10 million	14	33	38	109,426	229,718	266,078	7.1	7.2	7.5
1 to 5 million	144	340	388	291,663	667,652	759,919	19.0	20.9	21.4
500,000 to 1 million	224	463	513	155,770	317,166	353,802	10.1	9.9	9.9
Fewer than 500,000	—	—	—	927,625	1,698,055	1,826,313	60.3	53.1	51.3

Source: World Bank and International Monetary Fund, 2013:88.

Note: — = information not available.

Similarly in the Pacific, it is often the smaller cities in small, isolated, under-resourced countries which are so crucial in the wellbeing of people than in the large cities.

It was observed earlier that there is a coastal orientation to the spatial pattern of urbanization in Asia. This pattern is even more striking in the Pacific where the fast growing centres are all located in low sea level areas. It is well known that the Pacific is one of the major ‘hot spots’ of the likely negative impacts of climate change not only through increases in sea level but also the storm surges and high tides associated with them. This has become an issue of world attention (Piguet and Laczko, eds., 2013).

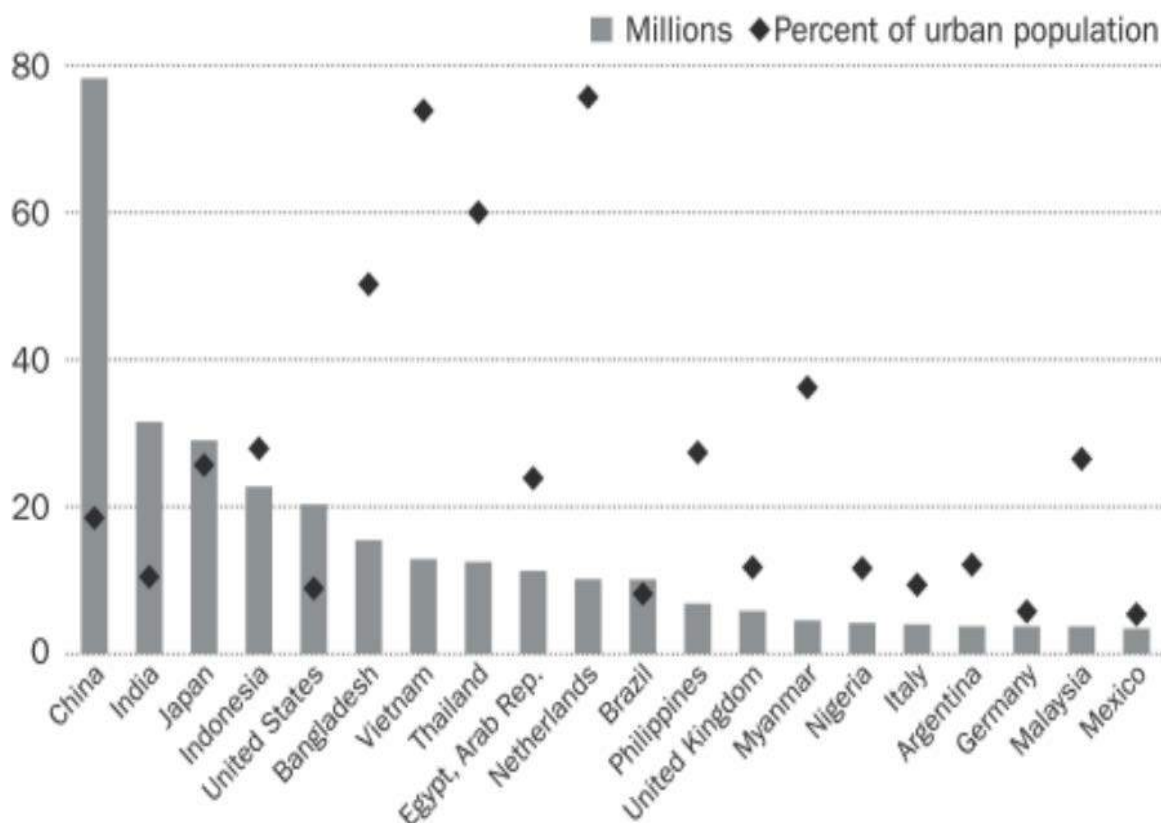
The strong coastal orientation of Asia's megacities, and indeed of the total urban population, has some implications from the perspective of climate and environmental change, particularly a substantial exposure to the risk of impact from sea level rise. Accordingly, in a global assessment (Wheeler, 2011) of the projected population at risk from sea level rise in 2050, the 20 countries with the largest numbers included 11 Asian countries of which six were in Southeast Asia – Indonesia (20.9 million people), Philippines (13.6 million), Viet Nam (9.5 million), Myanmar (4.6 million), Malaysia (3.5 million) and Thailand (2.6 million). McGranahan, Balk and Anderson (2007: 17–37) identified the global population living in urban areas in the low-elevation coastal zones (LECZ), that is coastal areas 10m or less below sea level. Of the 10 nations with the largest numbers of people living in these zones, eight are Asian and four are in Southeast Asia – Viet Nam, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines.

Internal migration in Asia is increasingly characterized by:

- Growing settlement in coastal areas;
- Expanding urbanization.

In fact, current patterns of internal migration in many countries are increasingly concentrating in areas with a high risk of being affected by climate change. Figure 6 shows that Asian countries are predominant among the global urban population living in low-elevation coastal zones and most at risk from sea level rises and associated tidal surges.

Figure 6: Countries with highest Urban Populations living in the Low-elevation Coastal Zones, 2000



Source: Hildebrand, Kanaley and Roberts, 2013:15.

DRIVERS OF URBANIZATION AND URBAN GROWTH

The dynamics of rapid urbanization and urban growth in Asia and the Pacific are complex. Much discourse sees it purely as a permanent shift of people involving migration from living in a rural location to living in an urban one. However, there are a number of processes involved:

- Natural increase (i.e. excess of births over deaths);
- Net internal migration (i.e. excess of in-migrants from elsewhere in the country compared with outmigrants moving to such areas);
- Net international migration (an excess of immigrants from other countries over emigrants moving to such countries);
- Reclassification of areas from rural to urban, often by the lateral extension of large urban areas to swallow up surrounding rural areas and smaller cities and towns.

Unfortunately the relative contribution of the four elements to urban growth in Asia over the last 15 years has not been calculated. In fact, this estimation has only been made for the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (United Nations DESA, 2001). One more recent estimate suggests that 40 per cent of the increase in the urban population in developing countries comes from migration or reclassification of rural to urban. In the large countries of China and Indonesia, however, these two factors accounted for more than 70 per cent of urban growth (World Bank and IMF, 2013: 85).

While our focus here is on migration as a driver of growth in cities, it must be remembered that in most Asian cities it is natural increase (facilitated by the fact that most migrants are in the young adult childbearing age groups) and reclassification which are the largest elements in growth. Moreover it must be emphasized that while international migration is playing an increasing role, especially in the gateway megacities, the migration shaping urban development in the Asia-Pacific is overwhelmingly internal. While international migration has become a key element in the growth and economic and social transformation occurring in large cities in the West, this is the case for very few cities in the Asia-Pacific – perhaps this is why the city states of Singapore and Hong Kong, China fit this model. While attitudes are shifting, Castles' (2003) characterization of Asian countries seeing migration negatively and strongly against permanent migration settlement as opposed to temporary workers remains important in most countries in the region. Very few nations in this region allow the permanent settlement of foreigners.

A simple typology of internal and international migration to Asia-Pacific cities is presented in Table 5. The most salient distinction to be made in both internal and international migration within the region is between permanent settlement on the one hand and circular, temporary migration on the other. Daily commuting has also been added in the first category because the commuting fields of Asian cities are extremely extensive and involve millions of people moving daily. In fact, this type of movement could be included in both categories since, in parts of the region there are corridors of commuting across international borders, for instance Indonesia-Singapore, Malaysia-Singapore and Thailand-Malaysia. The main characteristics of internal migration to cities are considered later in this section. International migration to cities will be discussed in the next section but it is important to draw attention to return migration. Many countries in Asia have sent millions of students and other (especially skilled) emigrants abroad over the last two decades predominantly to North America, Europe and Australia.

Table 5: A Simple Typology of Migration to Asia-Pacific Cities

Internal Migration	International Migration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent displacement from hinterland • Circular migration • Commuting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent resettlement • Skilled temporary migration • Unskilled temporary migration • Return migration

Booming economies at home and government policy have seen an increase in the numbers returning to nations like China as well as to the 'tiger economies'. Virtually all of these resettle in the major cities of their homeland where they seek to best use their training and experience in the West to participate in the rapidly growing Asian economy.

Population movement has played a key role not only in the growth of urban centres in Asia but it has strongly influenced the social, economic and demographic structure and development of those centres. From the perspective of the growth of urban centres, it is apparent that net internal migration from the rural areas has been substantial. Table 6 shows estimates of the contribution of net migration to the growth of different sections of several major Asian cities over the 1990–2000 period. It indicates the increasing 'suburbanization' of the cities as well as the scale of movement. In 2005, Shanghai had a population of 17.78 million of whom 4.38 million were migrants who had lived in the city for more than six months. Moreover one third of all babies delivered were born to migrants (*Xinhua News Agency*, 7 April 2006). The table shows that were it not for the net migration factor, Shanghai's population would have declined over the 1990–2000 period. It also shows that the contribution of net migration to the growth of four ASEAN megacities varied between 16.2 per cent in Jakarta and 52 per cent in Bangkok.

Table 6: Contribution of Net Migration to Population Change in Asian Megacities, 1990–2000 (%)

Subregion of Megacity	Jakarta	Bangkok	Manila	HCMC	Shanghai	Taipei
Core	Negative	3	19	n/a	11.4	Negative
Inner zone	60.9	71	54	n/a	94.7	31.9
Outer zone	Negative	62	42	n/a	62.4	40.7
Mega urban region	16.2	52	38	46.3	104.4	na

Source: Jones and Douglass, 2008.

Permanent displacement from rural to urban areas is only one of the elements in rural to urban internal migration. There is a great deal of circular migration in Asian countries like China (Zhu, 2003) and Indonesia (Hugo, 1982). This often involves a migrant leaving his/her family in the village and then returning to the village periodically while working in the city.

One of the distinguishing features of China's urban populations is the duality between the resident population and the migrant worker population who are largely circular migrants. Such a distinction applies in all other Asian urban areas between a permanently settled resident population and a temporarily present group of 'circular migrants' from the outside. However, there are two things which distinguish the situation in China from that in other Asian cities:

- Firstly, the massive size of the circular migrant worker population. In 2008, such migrants in China numbered 225 million, of whom 140 million worked in urban areas outside of their home communities (Jun, 2010: 3). This means that migrant workers make up around one in four urban residents although the proportion is higher in some large cities. Moreover, those migrants comprise a large part of the rapid population increase in China's cities. Tie (2010: 4) has indicated that 38.1 per cent of the 420 million population increase in the PRC's urban population between 1978 and 2007 was accounted for by the influx of rural migrant workers. In 2006 a survey of 2,799 villagers by the Development Research Centre of the State Council found that 18.1 per cent of all rural workers had migrated to do long term off-farm jobs.
- Secondly, the differentiation between resident population and migrant worker is institutionalized through the *hukou* system. People are registered in their home area and it is difficult to transfer *hukou*, especially from rural to large urban areas. Accordingly, there are important differences in access to services in cities between residents with home *hukou* and migrant workers who still have a rural farmer *hukou*.

Many commentators in China have emphasized the need for the migrant worker population to become permanent urban residents and for this duality in Chinese cities to be ended and migrant workers to become integrated as settled city residents. While these recommendations have considerable merit, research findings on circular migration not only in China (Zhu, 1999; Hugo et al., 2009) but elsewhere (Hugo, 1982, 2009) have indicated that a more nuanced policy toward circular migration would have greater dividends for economic development and poverty reduction in Asian urban areas.

One of the 'truisms' of migration research is that 'There is nothing so permanent as a temporary migrant' (Martin, 2001). This is based on the belief that all temporary migrants see their current non-permanent status as a preliminary stage before they are able to settle permanently in their destination. If given the opportunity they will make the transition from temporary to permanent residence. However, research in both internal and international migration (Hugo, 1978, 1982, 2009) has shown that while some temporary migrants certainly fit this description, for others circular, temporary migration is seen as a persistent, continuing and preferred mobility strategy. For some temporary migrant workers in Chinese cities, there are significant advantages to circular migration between rural and urban areas over permanently settling in the city. Box 1 summarizes some of the main advantages that accrue from circular migration as a rural-urban mobility strategy. These advantages apply at individual, family, community and sectorial levels. Of course, there are disadvantages which are associated with circular migration as well and these are summarized in Box 2.

Box 1: Advantages of Circular Migration to Asian Cities

- Circular migration allows poorer families to maximize income and spread risk of income failure by facilitating them working in both rural and urban areas and in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.
- It maximizes the benefit of this income by earning in the city where both wages and costs are higher and spending in the village where both are lower.
- It facilitates the redistribution of wealth from the fast developing urban areas, which are the centre of investment and economic growth, to peripheral and poorer rural areas, lacking such investment.
- It provides a scarce source of funds in rural areas to facilitate job creation and development in those areas.

- It reduces the pressure on urban areas to provide housing, schooling, infrastructure, health facilities, etc. for their inhabitants.
- In China, if circular migrants keep their rural hukou, they can have two or three children instead of one child which is enforced in the city.

Box 2: Disadvantages of Circular Migration

- The social costs of separation from family can be substantial and very painful to those involved, especially where there is a great distance separating origin and destination. In China, only 20 per cent of migrant workers bring their families with them (Jun, 2010: 4).
- It is difficult to mesh with the demands of modern sector jobs, which require a 5–6 day week and an 8-hour day of their workers.
- The origin community can lose substantial numbers of its youngest, entrepreneurial and most economically and socially active members for long periods so that economic and social capital is diminished in those areas.
- Migrant workers in the destination can experience considerable hardship because of their marginal position and their lack of access to urban services.
- In China, if migrants surrender their rural hukou, they will have to give up their land. Land is an important consideration for support in old age.
- In China, some migrant workers are also reluctant to pay the high costs of being an urban resident through taxes, contributions to health and pension schemes, etc.

The important point to make here is that not all migrants in Asian cities want to move permanently to live in large cities. Moreover, it needs to be recognized that both permanent rural to urban relocation *and* circular migration between rural and urban areas can have positive outcomes on development and poverty reduction.

- For those who permanently relocate, their personal situation improves because they can gain access to all the services available in the city, increase their income and their family has access to education, health and other services.
- However, circular migration has also been shown to have the potential to deliver development dividends (Hugo, 2009) and reduce poverty in rural communities. Migrant workers remit much of their earnings to rural communities which can be used to improve the situation of their village-based families. In addition, there are wider effects arising from their investment in the local community. Moreover, returning workers bring back new ideas and ways of doing things and potentially can invest in productive activity in these home communities. Circular migration provides the potential for the benefits of rapid economic growth in cities to be spread to the countryside.

Hence there is great complexity in the substantial contribution which internal migration is making to the growth of urban areas in Asia and the Pacific. Yet there is another type of migration which is also increasingly shaping the size, composition and function of urban population in Asia – international migration.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND ASIA-PACIFIC URBAN DEVELOPMENT

International migration has not been nearly as substantial an element in Asia-Pacific urbanization as it has in contemporary population growth in the major cities of European-American societies. Nevertheless, it is assuming greater significance, especially in cities in the most developed countries in the region. In Singapore, for example, it is now estimated that 36 per cent of the population are foreign citizens and 27.7 per cent of the workforce are foreigners. In Hong Kong, China, 6.7 per cent of the population are citizens of other countries (Chiu, 2003). The number of foreign nationals in 2010 in Japan was over 2.2 million and there were some 224,067 overstaying illegal migrants, most of them in the nation's urban areas (Hayashi, 2013). In Seoul the number of foreign residents increased from 114,685 in 2004 to 129,660 in 2005. In cities like Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok, there are also significant numbers of foreigners. Although in China and in India the number of foreigners is still quite small, it is certainly growing as those cities become more globally linked 'world cities' and their economic and social linkages to other countries expand (Sassen, 1991; Friedmann, 1986). In addition, multinational corporations increasingly establish business activities in those cities and transfer their workers there. Moreover, with increasing economic and political co-operation between nations in the region such as ASEAN and APEC, the barriers to some movements have been somewhat reduced. This is especially true of student and skilled migrations. Furthermore, there are forces in the cities of the better off nations in the region which are creating a demand for unskilled workers especially in niches which have low status, insecurity and low wages. Accordingly the presence of unskilled immigrants is becoming increasingly evident in several Asian cities. It is important to stress that most of the growing international migration to Asian countries is destined for urban locations, especially the gateway cities, so its impact is highly concentrated especially in megacities.

There are a number of elements in international migration being directed to Asia's largest cities. The largest proportion of migrants are intraregional from other, usually nearby, Asian countries and much of the movement is from less developed, labour-surplus countries to more developed, better off labour-deficit economies. However, there is also a movement of more skilled persons (Hugo, 2014), often employed by multinational companies, from OECD countries and more developed Asian countries to less developed nations. This is partly a function of the human resource policies of multinational companies but also reflects the fact that the education/training systems in some economies are a mismatch with the skills needed in rapidly developing economies so management, engineering and other skills have to be brought in.

To summarise, the main international migrations to Asian cities are as follows:

- An inflow of professional and managerial expatriates. This group is increasing in size throughout the region and, while it involves some foreigners of Asian origin especially from India and the Philippines, skilled people from Europe, North America, Japan, Korea and Australia-New Zealand predominate. It is partly associated with increased foreign direct investment in these cities and the associated transfer of staff from parent companies located in more developed countries (MDCs). It also includes other skilled people who are in demand because local mismatches between rapidly growing and restructuring economies require jobs which cannot be met by the local training/education system. All major cities in the region have significant numbers of this group, especially Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong and Bangkok. An interesting dimension of this migration is the impact of the global financial crisis. Increasingly, European professionals from countries like Spain, Greece, Italy and Ireland have been seeking work in the dynamic Asian economies in substantial numbers. The North-South element of skilled migration to Asian cities has risen significantly.

- International students are becoming more and more mobile within the Asia region. Asia has for some time been the major origin of students to OECD countries (Abella, 2005; Kritz, 2006) but there is a growing movement to Asian countries to major, increasingly globally competitive universities located in major cities. For example, 20 per cent of Singapore's university students are foreign. There have also been large student migrations to Malaysia, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea.
- A substantial influx of women work as domestic maids, especially in the cities in the newly developing countries (NDCs) – Taiwan Province of China; Hong Kong, China; Singapore; Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia. They are predominantly drawn from Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka and number more than two million (Huang, Yeoh and Rahmann, eds., 2005).
- The construction industry in large cities with low fertility and population growth is often dominated by foreign workers. In Southeast Asia alone, this is the case in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok. In several countries, too, low-skilled foreign workers have been brought in to work in factories and in other low paid, low-skill areas.
- The so-called 'entertainment' sex industry is an important element in the major cities (Lim, 1998) where in several places foreigners, especially women, are employed. The number of undocumented workers often trafficked into the country is substantial.
- In several large cities, foreign workers, many of them undocumented, have become an important part of the informal sector often after entering the country first as workers in designated occupations like construction and manufacturing or as domestic workers.
- The gender differentials discussed earlier are contributing to increased marriage migration of women in the Asian region. Hugo (2006) shows that a third of marriages in the Republic of Korea and a quarter in Taiwan Province of China are now to foreigners, mostly from elsewhere in Asia. Asian international marriage is also being driven by increased global movement of young Asians, the role of a burgeoning marriage migration industry and the changing role of women in many receiving countries. This activity is not as concentrated in large urban areas as the other types mentioned above.
- During colonial times in Asia there were substantial independent movements of entrepreneurs and other workers from China and, to a lesser extent, India into Southeast Asia where, seeing the gaps in trade and industry, they were able to take advantage of the burgeoning opportunities. While other Asian countries currently largely prohibit such migration, Pacific cities have become an important destination of independent Chinese entrepreneurs moving in to set up businesses to exploit existing industries like fishing but also to cater to new urban tastes in goods.

All of these increasing flows of intra-Asian international migration are disproportionately concentrating foreign populations in the cities of Asia. They are leading to increased diversity in those cities – even in places like Japan, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan Province of China which have traditionally stressed their ethnic homogeneity. Other cities such as Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Bangkok and Ho Chi Minh City, have long had ethnic diversity because of the heterogeneity of the nations in which they are located and earlier waves of international migration from China and India. As the demographic and development differences within the Asia-Pacific countries become starker, it is likely that the pressure for international migration to fast growing cities will increase substantially.

Another type of international migration is transit mobility which focuses on cities in Asia. This transit migration has a number of key characteristics (Hugo, Tan and Napitupulu, 2014).

- It is intended to be temporary and is perceived by both migrants and hosts as a 'stopover' before moving elsewhere.
- Transit countries are often an intermediate location, geographically between origin and the intended destination.
- It is usually in a country with liberal entry provisions, which allows immigrants to stay for lengthy periods and where they are relatively free to work.
- Transit migrants are often settled in certain parts of the transit city.
- It is often guided by institutional structures, in particular the migration industry, which channel migrants through specific transit points. Similarly UNHCR refugee camps and IOM centres may play a comparable role.
- It often involves movement without documentation or irregular migration.
- It often involves asylum seekers who are waiting to be assessed as refugees.
- It is focused on selected large cities where networks and institutions have developed to facilitate onward movement and support people while in transit.

In recent years there has been a strong focus on Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, the main transit points for irregular maritime migrants to Australia (Hugo, Tan and Napitupulu, 2014). Southeast Asia's strategic location as one of the major global crossroads makes it inevitable that transit migration is important in the region. Thailand, and especially Bangkok, has long been recognized as a global centre for trafficking and transiting migrants (Skrobanek, Boonpakdi and Janthakeero, 1997). Singapore, historically, has been an important transit point for migrants but strong policies relating to border control have meant that it has become less important as a transit country for irregular migrants. Nevertheless, there are occasional reports such as those below.

'Bangladeshi irregular migrant workers bound for Malaysia have allegedly been using Singapore as a transit point instead of taking direct flights from Dhaka to Kuala Lumpur. They are using this alternative route in a bid to avoid the extra strict monitoring by Malaysian immigration authorities on passengers arriving at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport from Dhaka' (*New Straits Times*, 4 November 2006).'

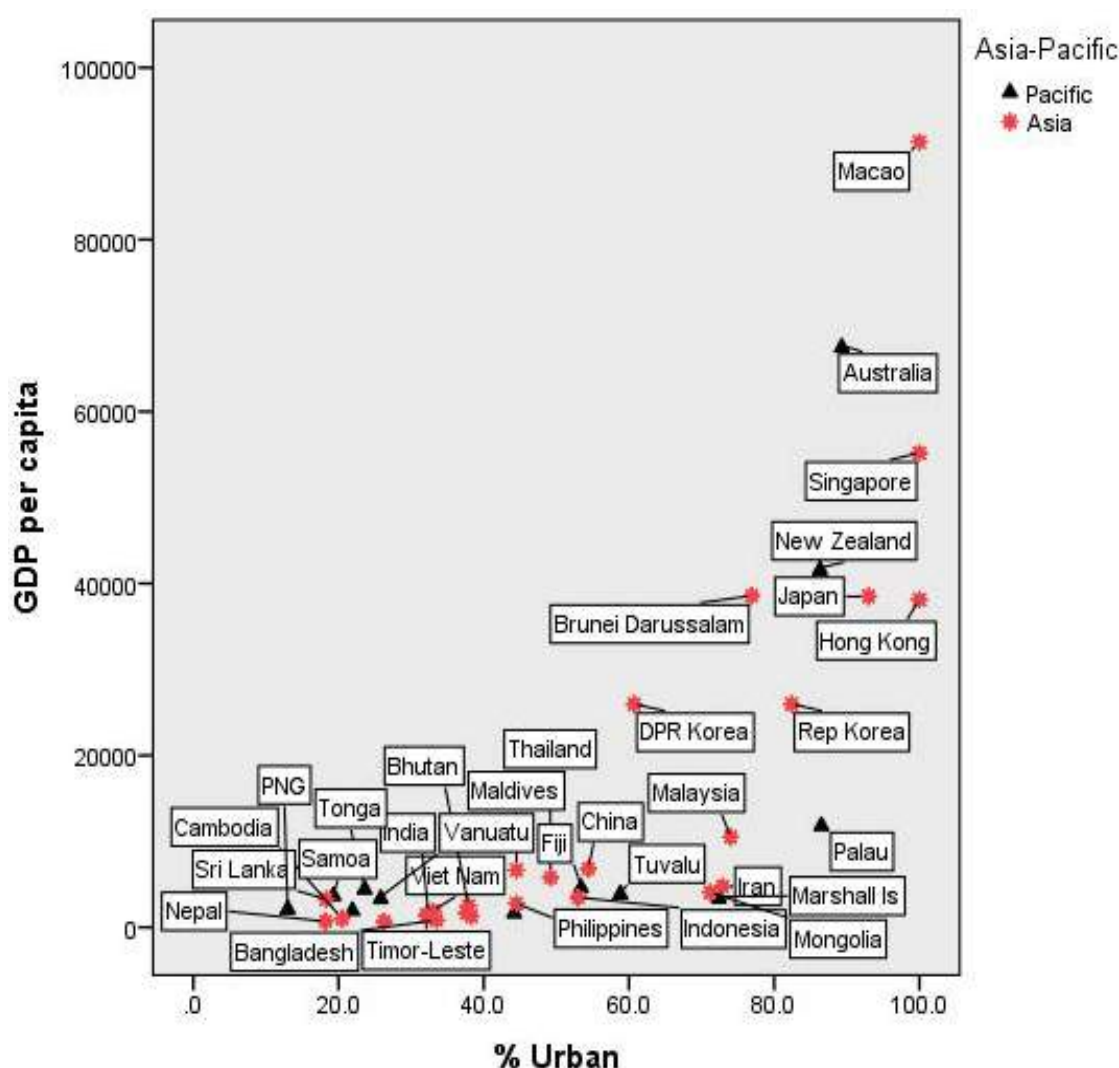
Kuala Lumpur has also become a major transiting point as illustrated by the 2014 Malaysian Airlines plane crash where two of the passengers were Iranian irregular migrants who had transited in Malaysia and intended to move to Germany.

The corridor concept has gained increasing use in examining contemporary migration whereby countries' immigration and emigration flows are dominated by a single destination or origin. It is interesting to consider how they focus on particular cities in the destination countries. While there are cases where particular cities are dominant destinations (especially in the city states of Hong Kong, China and Singapore), in general the corridor concept has less utility in the Asia-Pacific for individual cities than for country to country linkages. Of course, there are concentrations in megacities where labour shortages and high skill jobs are located. However, much of the movement consists of domestic workers, farmers, fishermen, forest workers, plantation workers and factory workers who are located across the nation.

MIGRATION, URBANIZATION AND POVERTY IN ASIA-PACIFIC

There are important linkages between urbanization on the one hand, and economic development and poverty reduction on the other. While the data (especially that relating to urbanization) are compromised in a number of countries, Figure 7 shows that there is a clear correlation in Asia and the Pacific between level of urbanization and GDP per capita. 'Location' is important at all stages of development but it is especially significant in poorer and developing countries (World Bank and IMF, 2013, 85). It is apparent, however, that not only are there wide disparities between rural and urban areas in development and living standards but that processes associated with urbanization have an impact upon national and regional development.

Figure 7: Asia-Pacific: Level of Urbanization, 2014 and GDP per capita, 2013



Source: United Nations, 2014b; World Bank, 2014.

Turning to the linkages between urbanization and poverty, there are a number of global generalizations which are emerging:

- Poverty rates are falling in both rural and urban areas
- Poverty rates are significantly lower in urban than in rural areas
- With the growth in urban and the decline in rural populations, however, poverty is becoming an increasingly urban issue in Asia and the Pacific.

Table 7 shows that South Asia had substantially higher poverty rates than the remainder of Asia and that poverty is high in both rural and urban areas. Moreover, it is evident how the differential between urban and rural poverty rates persisted between 1990 and 2008. There was, however, a striking change in East Asia and the Pacific over this period. In 1990, there were almost 1 billion in poverty but by 2008 this had been more than halved. The decline in poverty rates are spectacular with rural rates declining from 67.5 per cent in 1990 to 20.4 per cent in 2008. Even more striking is the decline in urban poverty rates from 24.4 to 4.3 per cent.

Table 7: Poverty rates are falling in both urban and rural areas but are lower in urban areas (share of the population earning below USD 1.25 a day)

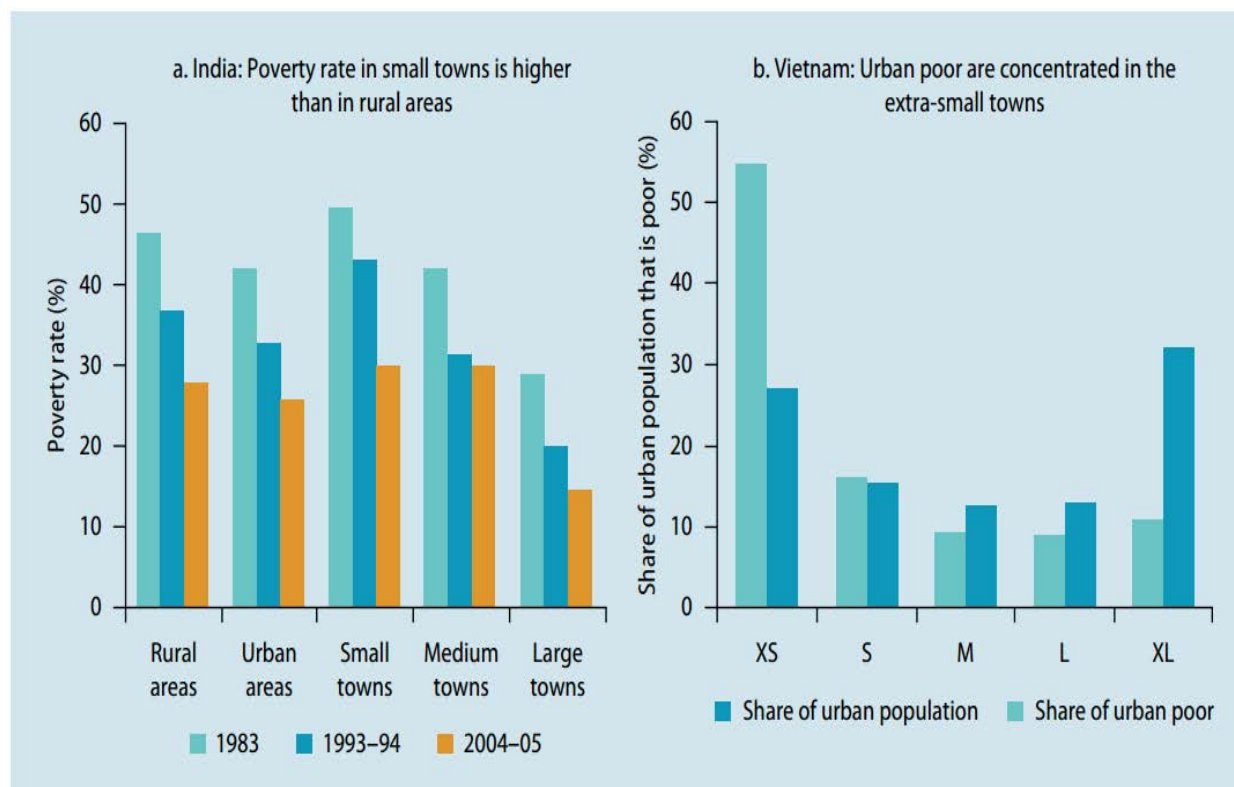
	1990		1996		2002		2008	
	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban
East Asia and Pacific	67.5	24.4	45.9	13.0	39.2	6.9	20.4	4.3
Europe and Central Asia	2.2	0.9	6.3	2.8	4.4	1.1	1.2	0.2
Latin America and the Caribbean	21.0	7.4	20.3	6.3	20.3	8.3	13.2	3.1
Middle East and North Africa	9.1	1.9	5.6	0.9	7.5	1.2	4.1	0.8
South Asia	50.5	40.1	46.1	35.2	45.1	35.2	38.0	29.7
Sub-Saharan Africa	55.0	41.5	56.8	40.6	52.3	41.4	47.1	33.6
Total	52.5	20.5	43.0	17.0	39.5	15.1	29.4	11.6

Source: World Bank and International Monetary Fund, 2013:87.

Recent research (World Bank and IMF, 2013: 88) have suggested there are 'poverty city size gradients' whereby there is a relationship between the size of place and the rate of poverty. Poverty tends to be lowest in the largest cities and higher in small cities and towns. The World Bank and IMF (2013: 90) point out:

'Despite their megacities and sprawling slums, urban poverty in South and East Asia is firmly located in smaller towns, not in big cities'.

They present two examples to demonstrate this relationship. Figure 8 shows patterns for India and Viet Nam which reveal that poverty is greater in smaller towns than in cities. In India, for example, research between 2004 and 2005 found that the poverty rate was 28 per cent in rural areas and 26 per cent in urban areas. However, in Indian urban areas poverty rates in towns (population less than 50,000) was double those in cities with one million or more residents (Lanjouw and Marra, 2012; World Bank, 2011). In Pakistan and Bangladesh, the incidence of poverty is highest in rural areas (43%) followed by smaller towns and cities (38%) and then by metropolitan areas (26%) (Deichmann, Shilpi and Vakis, 2009).

Figure 8: India and Viet Nam: Poverty in Urban and Rural Areas

Note: Poverty rates based on Uniform Recall Period (URP) and official poverty lines.

Note: XS = > 4k – 50k; S = 50k – 300k; M = 300k – 500k; L = 1m–5m for centrally governed and 0.5m–1m for locally governed; XL = > 5m.

Source: World Bank and International Monetary Fund, 2013:91.

The Viet Nam example in Figure 8 shows an interesting ‘U’ shaped pattern. The two largest cities in the country (Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) have nearly a third of Viet Nam’s urban population but only a tenth of the national population living in poverty. However, 55 per cent of the urban poor live in the 634 Vietnamese smallest towns (World Bank and IMF, 2013: 90).

There is no doubt that urban dwellers have lower rates of poverty than other areas but there is increasing attention on income inequality within large urban areas, with ‘*dividend cities*’ being an increasingly important theme (e.g. UN Habitat, 2010; World Bank and IMF, 2013). Recent calculation of Gini Coefficients globally has shown (UN Habitat, 2010: 12):

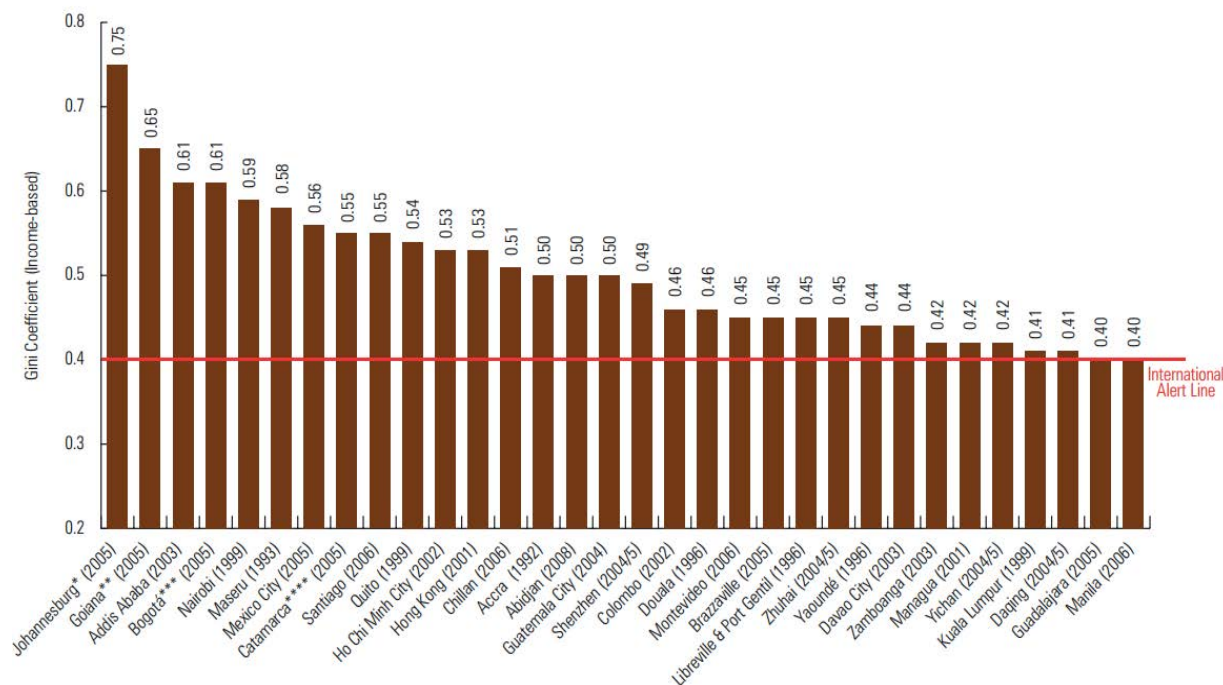
- They are higher (that is more unequal income differences) in developing countries, although increasing in developed countries.
- They are decreasing in Latin America but mixed in Africa, although it has some of the world’s most unequal cities.
- In Asia, however, the ‘urban divide’ is widening.

UN-Habitat (2010: 13) argues that this spatial divide:

‘... does just not reflect income inequalities among households, it is also a by-product of the inefficient land and housing markets, ineffective financial mechanisms and poor urban planning’.

Figure 9 depicts the world's most unequal cities and while it is dominated by African cities, Asian cities are well represented and income inequality within Asian cities remains an important issue.

Figure 9: Most unequal Cities (income-based Gini): Selected Cities in the Developing World, 1993–2008



* In addition to other seven South African cities: East London (0.75), Bloemfontein (0.74), East Rand (0.74), Pietermaritzburg (0.73), Pretoria (0.72), Port Elizabeth (0.72), Durban (0.72) and Cape Town (0.67)

** In addition to other six Brazilian cities: Fortaleza (0.61), Belo Horizonte (0.61), Brasília (0.60), Curitiba (0.59), Rio de Janeiro (0.53) and São Paulo (0.50)

*** In addition to other three cities in Colombia: Barranquilla (0.57), Cali (0.54) and Medellín (0.51)

**** In addition to other two cities in Argentina: Buenos Aires (0.52) and Formosa (0.44)

Source: UN Habitat, 2010:16.

CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

Introduction

The rapid urban transition in Asia and the Pacific has presented national and city governments with many pressing challenges. There are massive differences between OECD countries and less developed countries in the amount of local government expenditure per person as is shown in Figure 10. In the Pacific, this contrasts between the role of these dynamic cities as the engines of national growth compared with poverty, low levels of living and other negative elements affecting many of the residents. As Connell (2011: 124) points out:

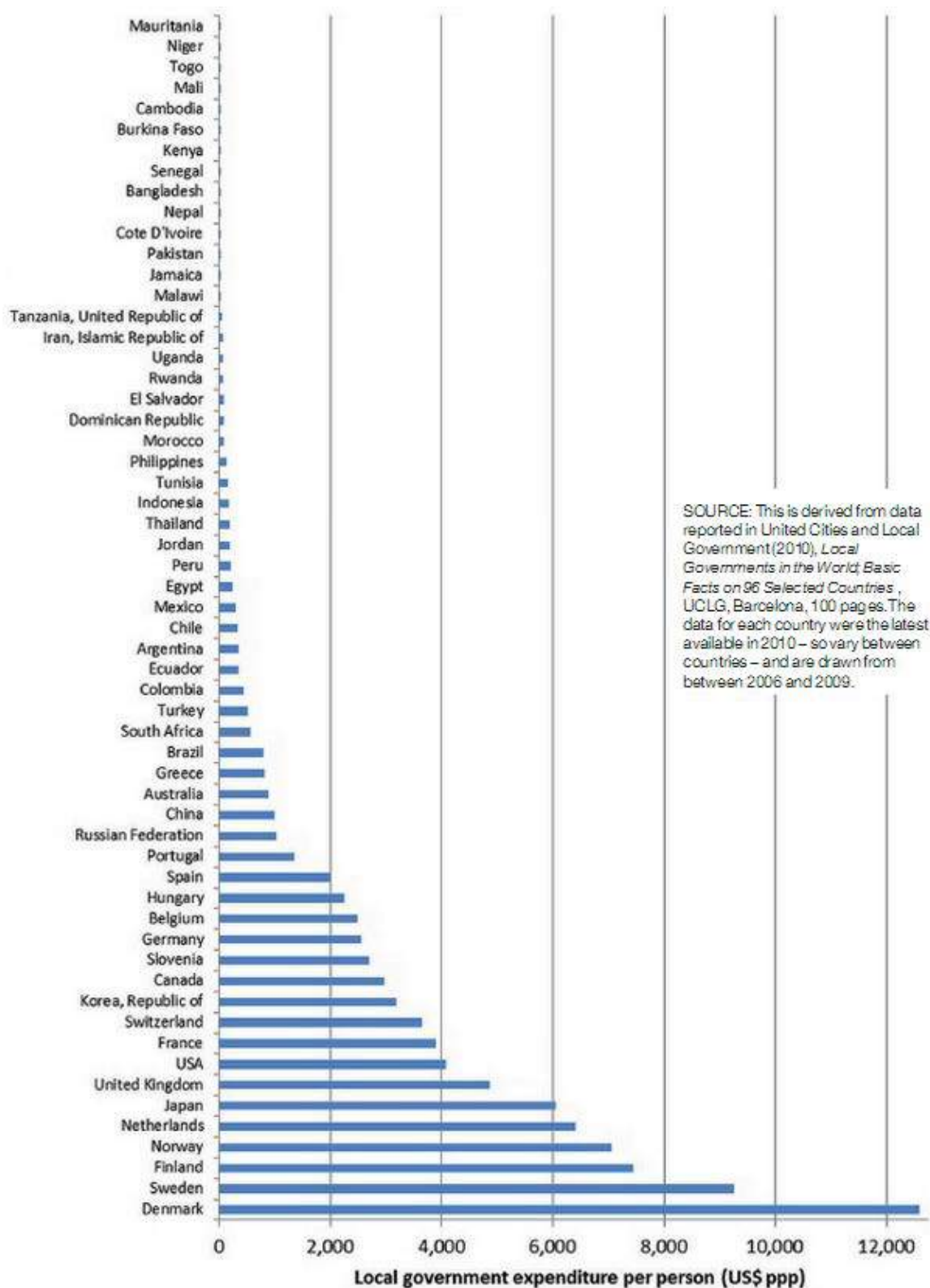
‘Urban growth has simultaneously contributed to national development as towns have become centres of employment, politics, culture and service provision, but urban centres are seen as associated with environmental degradation, overcrowding, unemployment and some degree of social tension and crime ... The consequence is rising unemployment, the growth of the informal sector and visible signs of urban poverty.’

This contradiction also plays out in Asian urban areas. In fact, Asia and the Pacific are presenting urban planners and administrators with new challenges which they have not experienced in OECD nations or in a more exacerbated form.

At the outset, it is crucial to stress that the challenges facing urban areas should not only be seen in ‘problem’ terms but also in terms of the opportunities which they offer. Both types of challenges demand effective policy responses. The first to improve the lives of residents and the second to ensure the benefits of economic and social opportunities created by urbanization are not lost or diluted.

Housing and Living Conditions

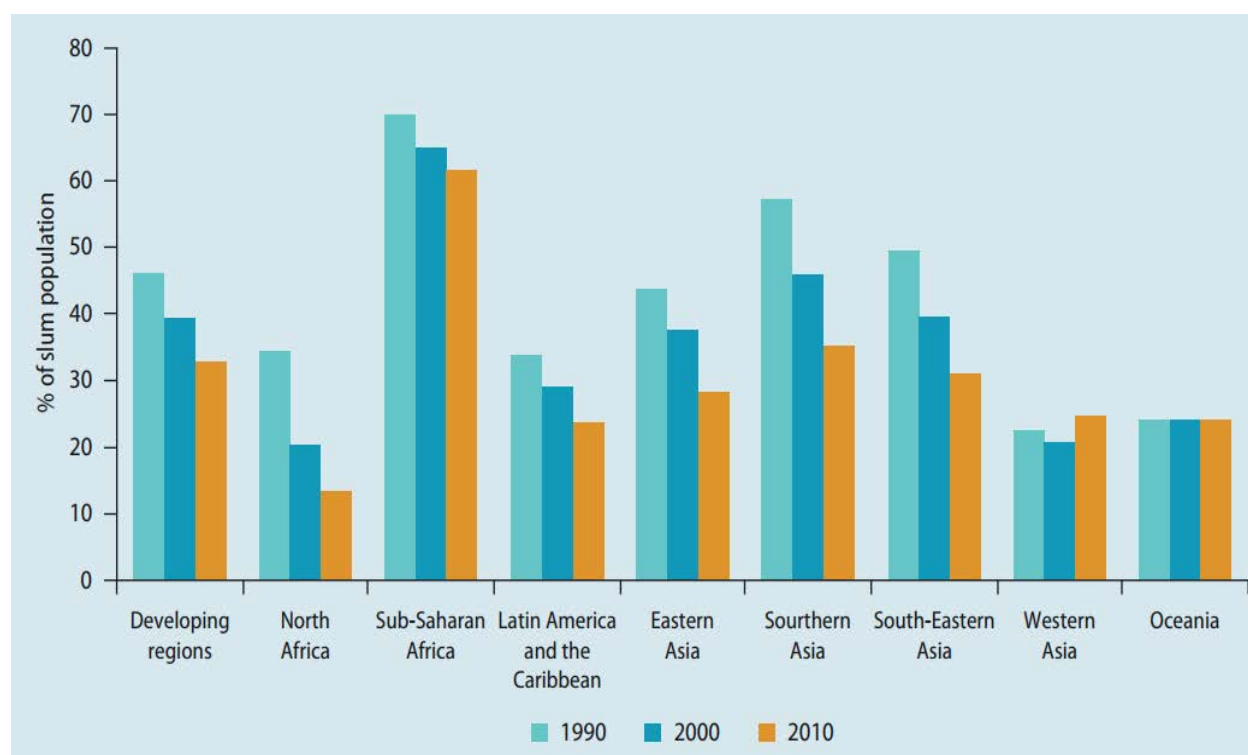
Large Asian cities have central business districts which are increasingly coming to resemble their counterparts in the West; however the extensive peripheral, mainly residential, areas remain quite distinctive. They are often complicated by the complex land and property rights in countries like Indonesia. In addition, the lack of effective zoning in some cities sees substantial industrial complexes not being separated from housing, although planning is becoming more effective. Rapid in-migration has meant that the housing industry cannot keep pace with demand. Moreover many of the newcomers do not have sufficient resources to compete in the local metropolitan housing market. Accordingly, housing is a major issue and significant numbers accumulate in high density, unhealthy, poorly serviced slums. The latter are of two types of slums: one where the occupier owns the land and, second, where he rents it from the legal owner. In many countries, however, the slum dwellers are squatters who have spontaneously erected a house on government or vacant land. These dwellings range from hastily erected shelters to well built houses constructed over time by longstanding settlers.

Figure 10: The Range in Local Government Expenditure per person per year

Source: Satterthwaite and Dodman, 2013.

Figure 11 shows the proportion of urban population in global regions who are living in slums. There are some interesting time trends as well. Southern Asia is second only to Sub-Saharan Africa in the percentage of the urban population inhabiting slums but other parts of Asia also have more than a quarter of their urban population living in these conditions. It is encouraging, however, that this proportion has declined over the last twenty years reflecting the development of more mature and responsible housing markets and ‘housing booms’ such as that which has gripped China in recent years. In the Pacific region, however, there has been some stability with over a quarter housed in slums over the last two decades. Connell and Lea (2002: 154) argue that housing is the most basic element in the quality of life of people in Pacific urban areas. They show that some Pacific towns and cities have the highest density of housing than anywhere in the world. There is variation across the region with squatter areas widespread in the fast-growing large urban populations of Melanesia but with smaller patches in Polynesia and Micronesia. Urban housing for low income residents are some of the most intractable and visible elements of the urban scene in the Pacific (*ibid.*).

Figure 11: Proportion of Urban Population living in Slums, 1990–2010



Source: World Bank and IMF, 2013: 110.

Addressing the problems of slums in Asian cities has been one of the priorities of planners and policymakers in the region. It is estimated that, between 2000 and 2010, an estimated 172 million slum dwellers were affected by these programmes. China and India have been especially active in this respect with 125 million people moving out of slum conditions. However, the most significant improvements were recorded in Indonesia and Viet Nam. In 1990, it was estimated that nearly half of urban dwellers in South East Asia (UNESCAP, 2013: ix) lived in slums so substantial progress has been made.

The focus of attention on settlement patterns, living conditions and housing in Asia has concentrated on megacities but it is perhaps a greater issue in medium and smaller towns and cities. This has been analysed in the growing west Java city of Cirebon. The property industry has expanded massively not only

consolidating high income suburbs but also many failing ones because they are located in peripheral areas not easily accessible to the economic core of the Cirebon region. Speculative practices are widespread and housing purchased as an investment rather than for living in is rife as is the case in the large cities of other countries such as China. However, the scale of the projects is somewhat lower in Cirebon than it is in the larger cities (Fahmi et al., 2014).

Housing and neighbourhood conditions are key elements shaping the well-being of urban residents. The haphazard, informal development in some cities has meant that households have had limited access to portable and other services which especially influence health. It is estimated that more than 80 per cent of the slum population in South Asia lacks access to safe water and sanitation services. In fact, water is often sold in slums rather than provided through a central articulated system and the net costs are generally higher. Semba et al. (2009) showed that use of low priced, low quality water from mutual providers in Indonesian slums was associated with considerably higher infant and child mortality.

Levels of planning vary greatly throughout the Asia–Pacific region but are often complicated by customary rights of pre-existing populations to urban land and very complex land rights, obligations, ownership and rights. Connell and Lea (2002) have examined those issues in considerable detail. Land management in Pacific cities is predominantly highly privatized at a very low scale, making it difficult to develop uniform land practices.

While there have been outstanding achievements in reducing the rates of slum dwelling, policies in this area have not always had beneficial outcomes for the urban poor. On the one hand, some cities recognize that the slum can provide an entry point for new migrants and assist their transition from rural to urban living. On the other hand, others who favour deterring migrants moving to cities are strongly against improving living conditions in them. Accordingly, forced evictions from slums do occur in the region. Indeed, such evictions have increased since 2000 with one example being the 300,000 people who lost their homes to developments for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. In Indonesia, too, evictions occur with 100,000 evicted during 2003–2004 (World Bank and IMF, 2013: 110).

These issues have contributed to a continuing feeling of insecurity among large numbers of urban residents in the region. Efforts are being made to develop vulnerability indicators to establish the number of those facing this insecurity. Table 8 shows some urban communities in ASEAN countries having very high rates of areas at low sea level and high proportions living in slum settlements.

Table 8: Vulnerability Indicators in Indonesia, Philippines, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam

Indicators	Indonesia	Myanmar	The Philippines	Thailand	Vietnam
Urban population with access to improved sanitation	73%	83%	79%	95%	94%
Urban population living in areas where elevation is below 5 meters	5%	4%	4%	9%	9%
Population living in informal settlements (2005)	26%	46%	44%	26%	41%

Source: World Bank, 2013:84.

Health

With increased population mobility in the Asia–Pacific, there is increasing concern about the health implications of movement from rural to urban areas. The interrelationships between rural and urban migration are complex, including:

- Immigrants bring ‘new’ diseases with them to the city
- Immigrants are exposed to ‘new’ diseases in the city
- Poor living conditions in the city lead to poor health, especially for children
- Urban work places are more unsafe than rural areas
- Food insecurity results in poorer nutrition in the city
- Generally health services are more available in the city than the country.

It is not surprising therefore that health differences are an important part of the ‘great divide’ between urban areas in Asia and in the Pacific.

Globally, urban infant mortality rates, for example, are 8–9 points lower in the city than in rural areas. Moreover the East Asia region has the widest differential at 21 points. This is indicative of certain major forces producing such wide differentials. Individual Asian countries have even greater differences such as Cambodia (42) (World Bank and IMF, 2013: 97).

It is apparent that the greater availability of, and access to, health services in cities is one of the explanations for the difference between urban and rural infant mortality rates. It is also a good indication of the incidence of many other health issues along with the consistent long-term pattern of urban death rates being lower than in rural areas for all ages. There is also a strong association between availability of safe drinking water and good sanitation; 91 per cent of urban residents have access to these compared with 81 per cent of the rural population. While the development of publicly funded health services is significant across the region, one element that has played a role in improving health, especially in urban Asia, is the rapid development of private health services which now provide half of all medical services in the region (World Bank and IMF, 2013: 96).

As with many of the other health aspects considered here, it is necessary to differentiate between the ‘health dividend’ cities provide compared to that which the rural areas provide. There tend to be greater differentials in health between large cities and rural areas which are on the increase. This is largely due to better access to, and availability of, health services in the large urban areas (World Bank and IMF, 2013: 98).

It is important to point out, however, that urban areas harbour a number of major health risk problems that are less significant in rural areas. To some extent these are ecological. The movements of people from different ecological contexts means migrants may not have antibodies to cope with new localized diseases. Many newcomers to urban areas in Asia live in cramped unhealthy situations. Some workers may sleep outdoors or be exposed to infectious diseases through contaminated food and water. This may partially be the case with migrants, especially circular migrants, wishing to maximize the amount of their earnings they remit to their families back home. Moreover in some areas, new unhealthy living situations have emerged in the *in situ* urbanized areas described by Zhu (2003). These comprise very different land uses situated side by side, such as residential areas located around factories producing toxic water and subject to regular ‘escape’ of these contaminated materials. It has been suggested that the presence of small livestock in large numbers in the lower density residential areas of large cities is leading to the development of new diseases in environments which can spread to humans. The outbreak of pig and chicken diseases in China in the last 15 years and their diffusion to other countries is one example.

However, different social conditions in cities can lead to substantial increases in the risk of some diseases among immigrants and immigration living there. A comparative study of China and Indonesia (Smith and Hugo, 2008) demonstrates that new migrants practice risk-taking behaviour with regard to STDs, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and other diseases. Migration is often linked with an 'escape' from family and community restrictions, control and support in rural areas to relative freedom to do and try new things in the city. Moreover cities with brothels, a drug-taking industry and culture, and a gamut of criminal activities can leave migrants open to exploitation and contracting diseases. Accordingly, the incidence of and death rates from such diseases are higher than in rural areas.

One area which is of increasing concern is HIV/AIDS. While in most countries in Asia, prevalence levels are relatively low, there are some indications that it could spread quite rapidly and that one of the main vehicles for this is the high level of population mobility, especially that between rural and urban areas. There is growing recognition of an important nexus between labour mobility, the expanding commercial sex industry and HIV infection in Asia. As indicated earlier, the commercial sex industry has grown rapidly in Asia and its main location is in urban areas. Moreover, the sex industry is often located in areas within cities where there are large numbers of migrant workers, a group who are major users of the commercial sex sector. This is because most migrant workers, especially circular migrants, are young males who are free from close sanctions on their activities; if married, they are separated from wives and family; they often have cash available, and are lonely and disconnected from other life in the city. Hence the opportunities for contracting HIV infection are considerable, especially in Asia where the use of condoms for commercial sex is not well established. In several countries, high rates of infection have been found among sex workers and some groups of mobile workers. The infected workers then return to their home areas and to other urban work destinations and can potentially spread the disease. Moreover, most sex workers are migrant workers themselves and can contract the disease and spread it to their home village and to other urban areas since most do not work in a single city (Hugo, 2001).

Gardner and Blackburn (1996) have identified three important aspects of rural-to-urban migrants which place them at risk of health problems.

- Disruption. For many migrants their move involves significant disruption of their lives and traditional support systems. This dislocation can lead them to face risks to their health, especially in the case of forced migrants who have no choice about mobility and have to leave suddenly.
- Differences of migrants. Migrants are often different to non-migrants at the destination in culture and language as well as age, socioeconomic situation and financial circumstances.
- Difficulties in accessing services. Migrants may not be eligible for some services at the destination or lack knowledge of how to access them. In some cases, they may face discrimination which hampers their access to services.

One of the issues of interest in the relationship between migration and health is the extent to which migrants differ from the population in their destinations and in their origins. There can be significant 'healthy migrant effects' which operate in many international migrations, especially those crossing international boundaries. Migration is invariably selective of young adults and of the healthier among them. Indeed the international migration regulations of most countries exclude less healthy people and mandatory medical testing is applied to all intending migrants and migrant workers in several nations (Asis, 2005: 119).

However, it is often observed that over time migrant health in cities deteriorates because:

- Migrants can adopt less healthy practices, lifestyle and diet after migration. Hence Jatrana and Chan (2005), in their analysis of the influence of country of birth on self-reported functional disability in Singapore, found little difference between the Singapore- and China-born. They attribute this to the erosion of the healthy migrant effect over time as the China-born move closer to the Singaporean lifestyle.
- Some migrants, especially poorer groups, may be forced to live in marginal conditions at the destination. Migrants may be at greater risk of poor health because of crowded, unhealthy or exposed living conditions and lower levels of access to health services than the non-migrant population or because they are at a greater risk of sustaining work-related injuries. Biao (2004: 8; 2005) reports on a study in the Pearl River Delta in China which found that a third of migrant workers believed their health had been affected by their work conditions. He also shows vaccination rates are lower among migrant children than local children and that reproductive health status among migrant women was lower than for non-migrant women.

Food Security

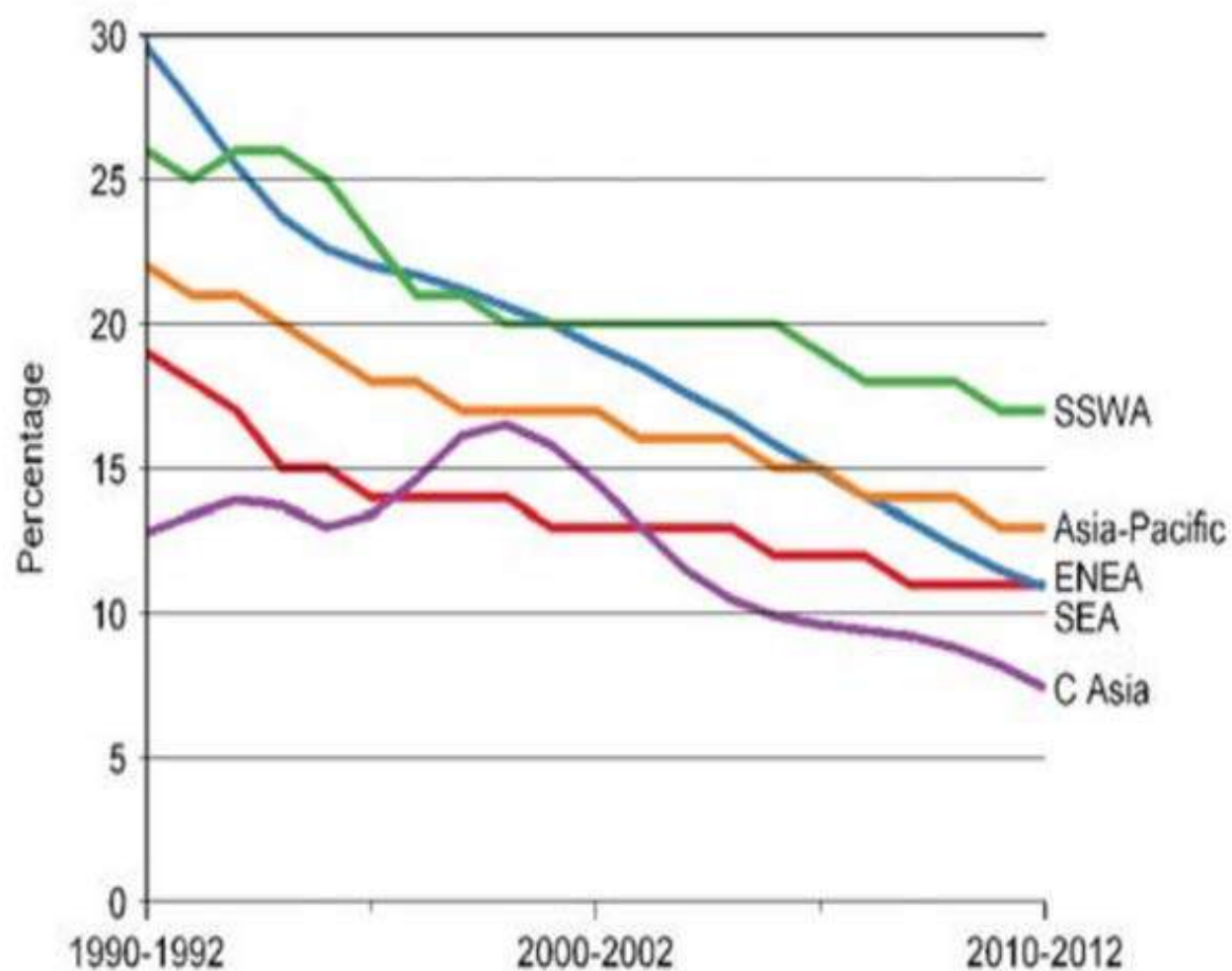
There is increasing appreciation that accessibility to affordable nutritious food is being put under pressure by the rapid growth of urban populations and that newcomer rural urban migrants can experience hunger more than their rural counterparts. The urban poor have been shown to be unable to afford adequate amounts and different types of food. This impinges upon their health and their ability to facilitate effective participation in the workforce. It has been estimated that, over the last 15 years, four out of 10 Asian children in cities have suffered from stunted development. This is clearly an important dimension of 'Asian cities dividend' because, like poverty, it is a function of inadequate dispersal of resources across cities. UN Habitat (2010: xiv) has made three important points on this issue:

- 'The structural food crises the urban poor keep experiencing on an ongoing basis call for fundamental policy remedies, including with regard to production, marketing, distribution, handling and control of food for the urban market.'
- 'Slum upgrading is strongly linked to health and nutrition programmes, and altogether should be part of a comprehensive approach to improved lives of the urban poor.'
- 'Eradicating hunger will require multiple interventions, and not only those on food availability. Use of safe water, improved sanitation and durable housing materials, combined with provision of sufficient living areas to ease overcrowding will improve the chances of better health outcomes and life conditions for slum dwellers'.

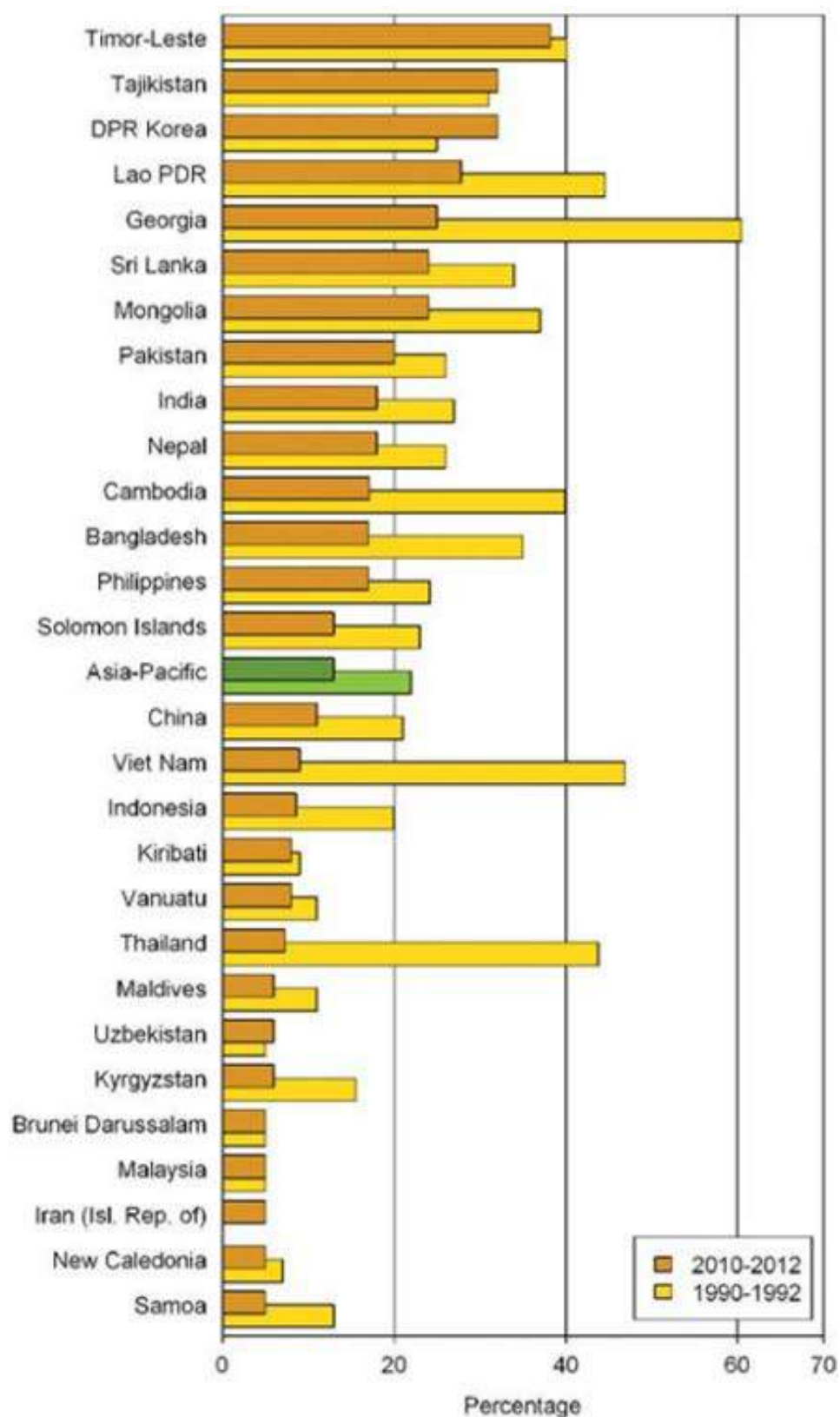
Traditional informal urban food systems are increasingly being replaced by modern systems which tend to deliver more expensive food in larger quantities and can be barriers to the poor.

There have been significant improvements in food security in the Asia-Pacific over the last two decades as Figure 12 indicates. Nevertheless, the region is home to two thirds of the world's undernourished population. Nevertheless, the prevalence of undernourishment fell from 22 per cent in 1990–92 to 13 per cent in 2010–12. There is, however, quite a significant difference between cities in different Asia-Pacific regions in the extent of undernourishment as is evident in Figure 13. There are a number of hunger 'hot spots' in the region in countries mainly in South and Southwest Asia. However, in East and Southeast Asia, undernourishment in several countries has been massively reduced over the last two decades. This is clearly evident in the Global Hunger Index where the GHI score decreased from 20.5 in 1990 to 12 in 2012 (ESCAP, 2013: 30).

Figure 12: Prevalence of Undernourishment, Asia and the Pacific, 1990-92, 2000-02 and 2010-12, by Region



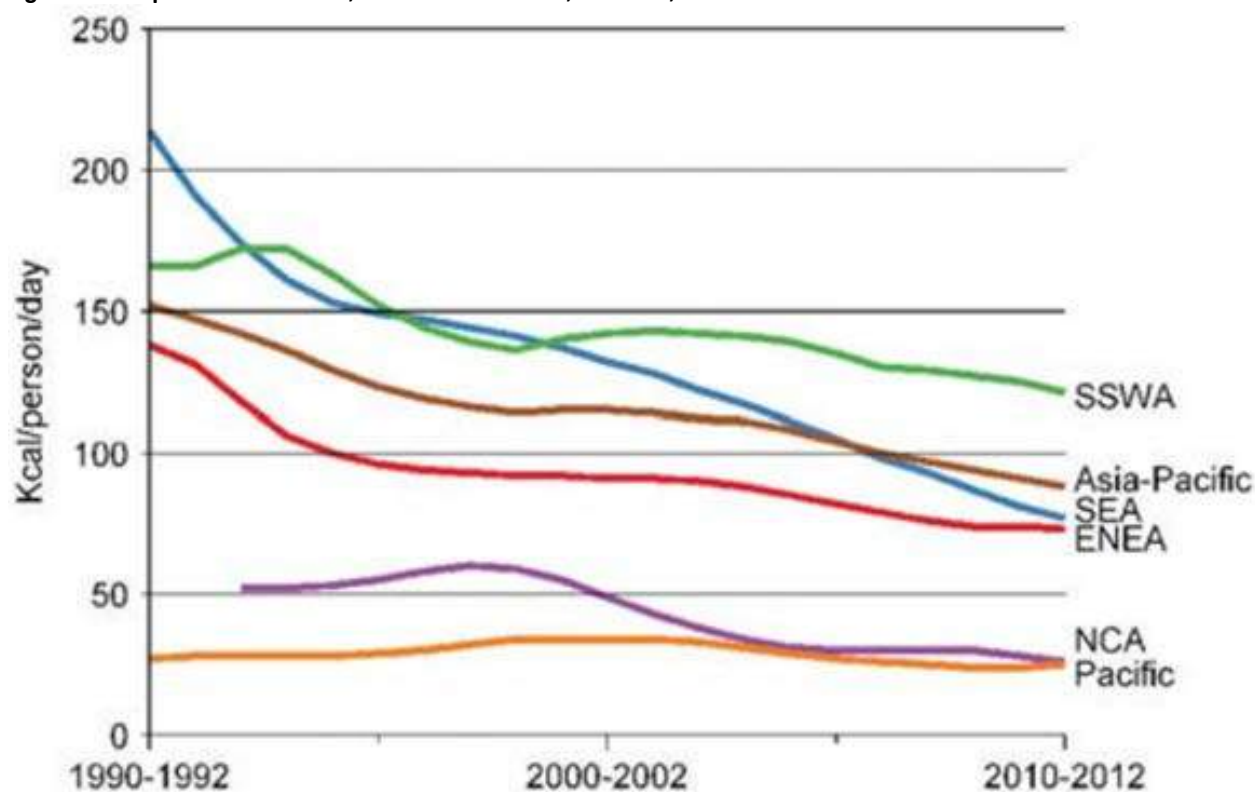
Source: UNESCAP, 2013:129.

Figure 13: Prevalence of Undernourishment, Asia and the Pacific, 1990–92 and 2010–12, by Country

Source: UNESCAP, 2013:129.

The differences between the regions are evident in Figure 14 which shows the depth of food deficit in Asia and the Pacific over the last two decades. Again the massive improvement in Southeast Asia is in evidence. It had similar levels to South-Southwest Asia at the beginning of the period but the improvement in South Asia, while significant, has been only a third compared with that of Southeast Asia. North Central Asia and the Pacific have maintained a low depth of food deficit over the period.

Figure 14: Depth of Food Deficit, Asia and the Pacific, 1990–92, 2000–02 and 2010–12



Source: UNESCAP, 2013: 131.

Crime

Crime can have profound impacts in Asia–Pacific cities where rates are substantially greater than in rural areas. While rates and effects vary between countries, the Asia–Pacific region has some of the lowest global crime rates, for example in homicide. However, this is a particular data black hole in the region. The Pacific is seen as having the lowest homicide rates yet this is not the reality of living in cities in this region. Connell and Lea (2002: 91) have described the significance and range of the informal sector in Pacific cities, especially in Papua New Guinea. One survey in Port Moresby found that 69 per cent of males, especially youths (19% of the entire workforce), were officially unemployed and were actually earning a living through crime. Moreover, they had incomes greater than those working legitimately. Gangs have created a widespread impact in the cities. Port Moresby is rated among the world's most notorious international crime cities like Rio de Janeiro, Kampala and Johannesburg (ibid: 92), Suva and Honiara and other Pacific cities where crime is a major issue.

In cities in Asia, massive differences have emerged between crime rates in countries which are essentially 'developed', such as Japan, Korea, Taiwan Province of China and Singapore, compared with those cities in less developed countries where social protection is inadequate and weak, and criminal justice systems ineffective. In the latter cities, UNESCAP (2013: 139) points out that the high incidence of crime in the cities:

‘... hamper economic development and reduce both the quality of life and the confidence that people need in order to invest in their neighbourhoods and businesses’.

Crime can be particularly associated with recent migrants to the city – often unfairly as it is regarding STDs and HIV/AIDS – where they are scapegoated and stereotyped as being a cause of higher levels of crime yet there is little or no evidence to substantiate that. They are more often exploited themselves than being involved in the exploitation. There is also a strong bias toward males in being the victims of crime in Asian cities reflecting the substantial young male component of rural-to-urban international and internal migration.

The sex industry has proliferated in Asia-Pacific cities although it has a long history in these cities. Lim (1998) has shown that, while prostitution is considered part of the crime scene in Asia, it in fact is a highly organized industry which is a major employer of women in these cities and needs to be considered as a significant and important contributor to the economy of those cities.

Work and the City – Men and Women

One of the most distinctive features of the economies in most Asian cities is that in most, more than half of the workers are employed in the urban informal sector. These are jobs which generally do not have fixed hours, are in family rather than formal enterprises, are small scale, often lack a fixed location, involve small investments, have no fixed earnings, involve no formal training, lack security and are not within the formal economy in terms of regulations, work conditions, taxation, etc. They involve provision of a myriad of services at the individual or household level, small scale selling and a wide range of skilled and semi-skilled trades. They often provide services to households but also are involved in a wide array of manufacturing and service activities and often are linked in complex ways with the formal sector. A major characteristic is that this informal sector is highly absorptive with new workers being able to readily enter it, largely through family, friendship or locality of origin connections than through possessing formal qualifications. Accordingly, new entrants to the city often enter the labour market in this way. Moreover, the informal sector's flexible hours and work week regime make it highly compatible with circular migration. Working in the formal sector, however, usually involves set daily hours and working weeks, which means that its workers need either to settle in the city or commute daily from the suburbs. Indeed, very long distance commuting has become characteristic of Asia's largest cities involving an array of transport but especially buses and railways. Very often, there is strong occupational segmentation in certain areas of the informal sector so that urban workers in particular occupations tend to come from the same areas of origin. While the bulk of informal sector activity is relatively small scale, some activities can grow to be quite large. Some informal sector activity takes place on the margins of law and indeed there are some activities which are considered illegal by city authorities.

Interpretations of the role of the informal sector in Asia's cities have changed over recent decades. An early view saw the sector as being more of a 'sink' to absorb the surplus of workers in such cities and an area for migrants to work until they got a 'real job' in the formal sector. This view has changed with increased recognition of the important role that the sector plays in Asian cities and their economies.

One of the distinctive features of rural to urban migration in Asia has been the importance of women in that movement, both internal and international, a feature which has differentiated it from other parts of the world (Hugo, 1993). Patterns vary from country to country but in many Asian countries historical and cultural factors have combined with particular developments in the industrial and service sectors of cities to expand employment opportunities for women (Lim, 1993). A United Nations DESA (2001: 41) study has found that, from examination of sex ratios of rural-urban migration flows in several countries, it is in Asian countries that the greatest feminization of flows has occurred. There are variations between countries but

generally there has been an increase in the involvement of women in rural-to-urban migration throughout the region due to:

- Increased growth of export-based large scale manufacturing and assembly activities in Asian cities. For many of the activities in those new factories (assembly of electrical devices, clothing, shoe and toy manufacturing, etc.), women are preferred by employers because they are generally paid lower wages, more easily controlled and better able to undertake tasks which involve delicate and intricate finger work as well as repetitive tasks (Lim, 1993). The majority of these women have high school-level education and are directly recruited from rural areas and live in dormitories or shared accommodation. Employers often exploit them and there is a tendency to dismiss them once they get into the family formation age group, so there is a high turnover. Unfortunately, this has also involved many international female migrants.
- As the cities have expanded, there has been a rapid increase in demand for domestic workers as both the middle and upper classes conventionally employ several domestics. The great majority are women and, while large numbers are internal migrants recruited from rural areas, foreign workers are increasingly important. This group, especially the latter, have been subject to a great deal of exploitation and abuse.
- There is also evidence of more women moving independently for educational and employment reasons to cities. In recent decades, traditional sanctions on the independent movement of women have been eroded with increased education and the breakdown of strong patriarchal, extended families.
- The informal sector of cities has many opportunities for females, especially in small scale selling and service activities. Mainly internal migrants, both permanent and circular, find work in these sectors but increasingly international migrants, from countries like Thailand and Malaysia, are also being employed.
- There has been substantial growth of the sex and entertainment industries in Asian cities and women involved in these are almost entirely rural-to-urban and circular migrants, both internal and international (Lim, 1993).

A key characteristic of Asian cities has been that their female labour forces tend to be much more occupationally segregated than is the case for their male counterparts. In some areas of employment, exploitation may well occur, not only in work that takes place in homes (domestics) and in illegal or quasi legal contexts (sex work) but also in more formal work environments like factories. However, it is clear that social networks offer some protection in these situations. The increasing level of female workforce participation outside the home is characteristic of Asian cities throughout the region. There is strong evidence of marriage ages being considerably higher in cities than in rural areas and fertility levels being much lower. Indeed, several Asian cities have fertility levels below replacement level (for instance, Jakarta and Bangkok) and some (such as Shanghai) have some of the lowest contemporary fertility levels in the world.

Many commentators in the past have seen cities as having a parasitic role in relation to their hinterlands by extracting their surpluses, depriving them of their most talented and entrepreneurial residents providing services, etc. In fact, these attitudes are still in evidence today, with some policymakers developing anti-migrant policies to deter migrants moving to the cities and blaming them for the pressure put on planning and resources. However, in the Asia-Pacific region, there is an emerging consensus that cities, especially the megacities, are major 'engines of growth' in national economies.

‘... Bangkok produced 37 percent of Thailand’s GDP and Manila, 24 percent of the Philippines’ GDP. In 1990, the ratio of city GDP per capita was 3.5 for Bangkok, 1.9 for Manila and 3.7 for Shanghai’ (Jones, 2002: 121).’

Over the last decade the most dynamic sectors in national economies in the region have been largely urban-based activities. Many countries in the region have deregulated and opened up their economies to outside investment and the focus of most of this investment has been the cities. Much of the foreign investment was from Japan, Taiwan Province of China; the Republic of Korea; Hong Kong, China; and Singapore and has generated a massive growth of factories to take advantage of cheap, abundant and readily controlled labour in poorer countries in the region. Industries like clothing, electrical goods, footwear and toy manufacturing, which are all highly labour intensive and involve much assembly type activity, have been drawn to the cities of the poorer nations in the region. In recent years, China has become the main focus of this investment so that the population of its largest eastern region cities are growing at unprecedented rates. However, the onset of an economic crisis in several Asian countries saw a withdrawal of foreign investment from countries like Indonesia, which had a substantial impact on employment in some cities.

The development of export-oriented manufacturing activity has created considerable demand for low- and medium-skilled labour, especially for women. It has influenced the economic structure and form of cities with most factories being very large and located on the rapidly expanding peripheries of the cities. There have been substantial spillover effects on other parts of the urban economy, on both formal and informal sectors. Moreover, through remittances, there have been impacts throughout the hinterland of cities.

While the last decade has seen rapid economic growth in large urban centres, some regional areas have suffered as a result of a concentration of power, investment, decision-making and services in large cities. The contrast has grown between the prosperity of these cores and the many peripheral areas and has been exacerbated by highly entrepreneurial, risk-taking and educated groups from the outer regions being attracted to these centres. The opening of national economies to outside investment has aggravated this situation with most foreign investment being concentrated in the nation’s largest urban areas. As a result, the largest cities have attracted a disproportionate amount of national provision of services and other activities and wide gaps have grown between GDP levels per capita and growth within national spaces. In some nations, however, political changes in the late 1990s began to challenge the concentration of investment, power and resources in a few major cities. In Indonesia, for example, the fall of President Suharto in 1998 has been followed by a period of democratization and, associated with this, by a major move toward decentralization of decision-making, revenue collection, power and investment to the regional level. This is especially evident in the massive development of regional towns and cities in Indonesia. A major plank of Indonesia’s ‘Master Plan for Accreditation and Expansion of Indonesia’s Economic Development’ (MP3EI) is to identify not just sectorial approaches but also spatial, regional development approaches. The latter involves developing centres of growth in each region through the promotion of economic corridors.

Social Inclusion, Wellbeing and Protection

The rapid economic growth in Asia’s cities in recent years has not been shared equally between all inhabitants. Indeed, there are stark inequalities evident expressed most graphically in the contrasts between opulent leafy sections of cities characterized by spacious housing on large tracts of land occupied by the elite and the overcrowded, often unhealthy, ramshackle dwellings of the poor usually located in squatter settlements on public land with little or no service provision. While the latter areas are extensive and of concern in Asian cities, they can often tell a misleading story to the outside observer of conditions in Asian cities. As Jones (2002, 121) points out:

‘Most indicators of welfare or human resource development, such as consumption levels, mortality rates and educational attainment, show that big city dwellers (for example, in Jakarta or Bangkok) have a considerable advantage over their rural counterparts.’

Nevertheless, within cities there are steep gradients of inequality between the haves and have-nots in these cities and those differences may be increasing.

This ‘social divide’ in Asia–Pacific urban areas is manifest in wide differences in living conditions, housing, access to utilities and services and exposure to health, crime and other risks. There are a significant proportion of these populations who are *excluded* from many of the benefits of city life. A comprehensive analysis by UN Habitat (2010: XIV) concluded:

‘Based on a systematic comparison of slum with non-slum populations within the same city, and groups of slum dwellers suffering various types of shelter deprivations, this Report demonstrates with compelling evidence that hunger, health and poor education outcomes have strong class gradients as measured by the intensity of shelter deprivations’.

This pattern of social exclusion often has ethnic elements and in-migrants and immigrants are especially exposed to it. The migrant/non-migrant divide was most striking in Chinese urban areas where the *hukou* system legally separated the two groups with the non-migrant population being denied access to a range of housing, health and social welfare services. However, while this paper was being written, a number of changes in *hukou* have been announced which would appear to herald a transition in Chinese cities and will break down many of the walls between the rural and the urban *hukou* populations. Indeed, one of the most exciting developments in the region, especially in the larger nations like China and Indonesia, is the introduction of universal government-organized social welfare, health and older person schemes.

China provides a striking example. Table 9 shows the large numbers of Chinese with rural *hukou* who are working outside their home community – the so-called floating population currently numbering over 269 million persons. Table 10 shows the proportion of these workers who have been strongly discriminated against in urban areas in the past but are now included in the new range of health, ageing and other social welfare government systems. While it is still only a minority who have been covered, it represents an important change in direction.

Table 9: Numbers of Rural Migrants in China, 2008–2013

Category	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total rural migrants (10,000 persons)	14,041	14,533	15,335	15,863	16,336	16,610
Partial household move	11,182	11,567	12,264	12,584	12,961	13,085
Entire household move	2,859	2,966	3,071	3,279	3,375	3,525
Local migrant workers	8,501	8,445	8,888	9,415	9,925	10,284
Total	22,542	22,978	24,223	25,278	26,261	26,894

Source: Chinese National Bureau of Statistics, 2014.

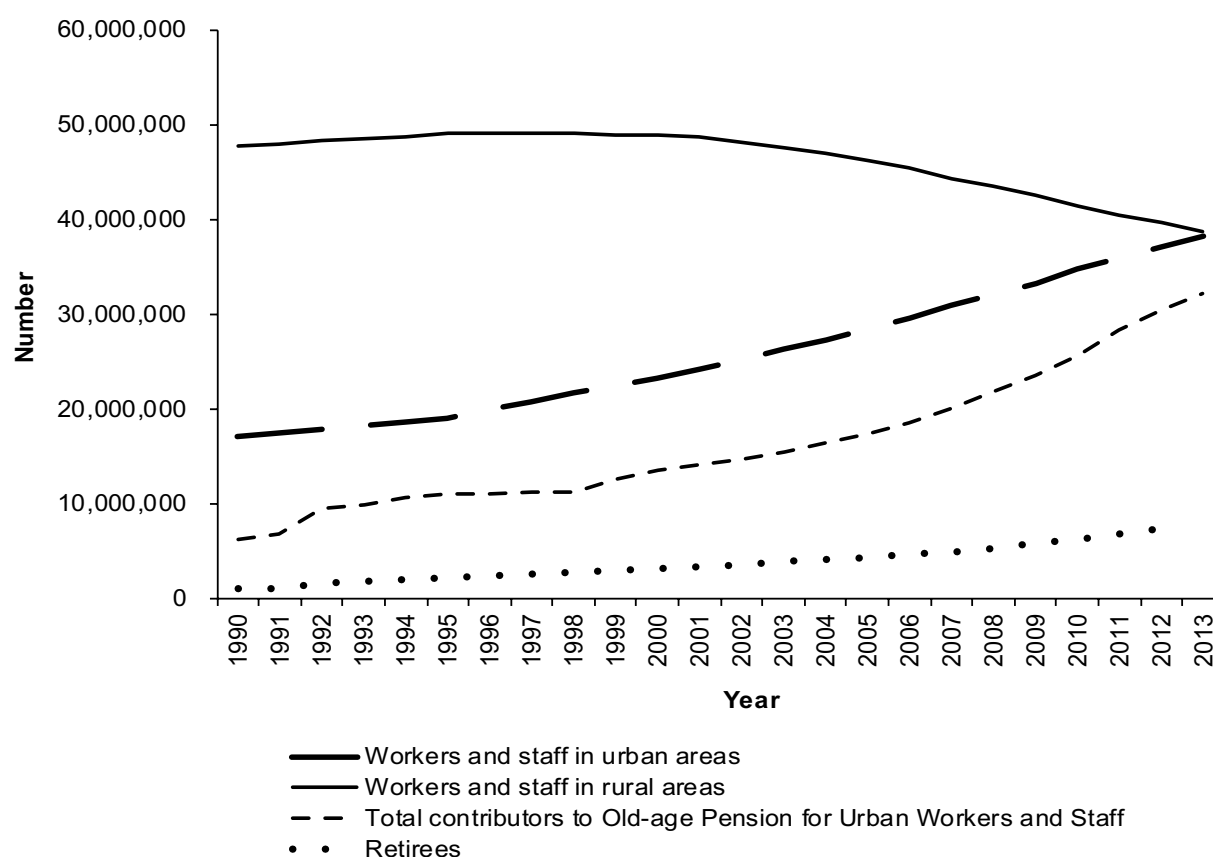
Notes: Migrants are defined (by Chinese National Bureau of Statistics) as labourers who have their household status (agricultural) registered in rural hometown, but work/live in areas beyond hometown for six months or more or engage in non-agricultural activities in hometown. Local migrant workers: those registered *hukou* in hometown and also work in non-agricultural sectors within their hometown. Outmigrant workers: those that registered *hukou* in hometown but work in places beyond hometowns.

Table 10: China: Per cent of Outmigrant (rural *hukou*) Workers covered by Government Social Welfare Schemes, 2008–2013

	Age Pension	Health	Unemployment	Birth	Work Related Injury
2008	9.8	13.1	3.7	2.0	24.1
2009	7.6	12.2	3.9	2.4	21.8
2010	9.5	14.3	4.9	2.9	24.1
2011	13.9	16.7	8.0	5.6	23.6
2012	14.3	16.9	8.4	6.1	24.0
2013	15.7	17.6	9.1	6.6	28.5

Source: Chinese National Bureau of Statistics, 2014.

Figure 15 shows the trends in the growth of China's urban and rural populations. The graph also compares the numbers of people covered by the old age pension scheme. While rural numbers have increased, the increment is far greater in urban areas. This is indicative of cities all over the region with inhabitants having much greater access to social welfare than is the case in rural areas.

Figure 15: China: Number of Urban and Rural Workers and Participation in the Old Age Pension Scheme, 1990–2013

Source: Chinese National Bureau of Statistics: China Labour Statistical Yearbook for various years. Public briefings of national economy and social development for various years.

The Demographic Dividend

Although Asia–Pacific urban areas confront a range of problems as a result of the influx of rural-to-urban in-migrants and immigrants, there are also some particular advantages which enhance their productivity. The concept of demographic dividend is almost always applied to countries but it is suggested here that it is a key factor in the growing prosperity of cities.

The demographic dividend can be defined as follows:

A rapid decline in fertility such as China has experienced can create a “youth bulge” of large numbers of young people born in the final years of high fertility. As they move through the age pyramid they can deliver a *demographic dividend* of economic growth when the bulge passes through the working age groups so that the workforce grows faster than the total population. If countries take advantage there is a virtuous cycle of wealth creation (Bloom, Canning and Sevilla, 2003: 39).

It is delivered through:

- Increased labour supply, with women more ready to enter the workforce
- Increased savings
- Human capital investments increase.
- However, there is a need for a favourable policy environment to be put in place if this dividend is to be realized.

It is estimated that the demographic dividend factor alone – the strong concentration of the population in the high producing young adult age range – accounted for a fifth of China’s prosperity over the last few decades. Internal and international migration are creating the same concentration of young workers in the large cities and adding to the effects of fertility decline. This represents an enormous potential element of productivity growth in those cities as long as effective policies are made and programmes created so that the full beneficial impacts may be realized.

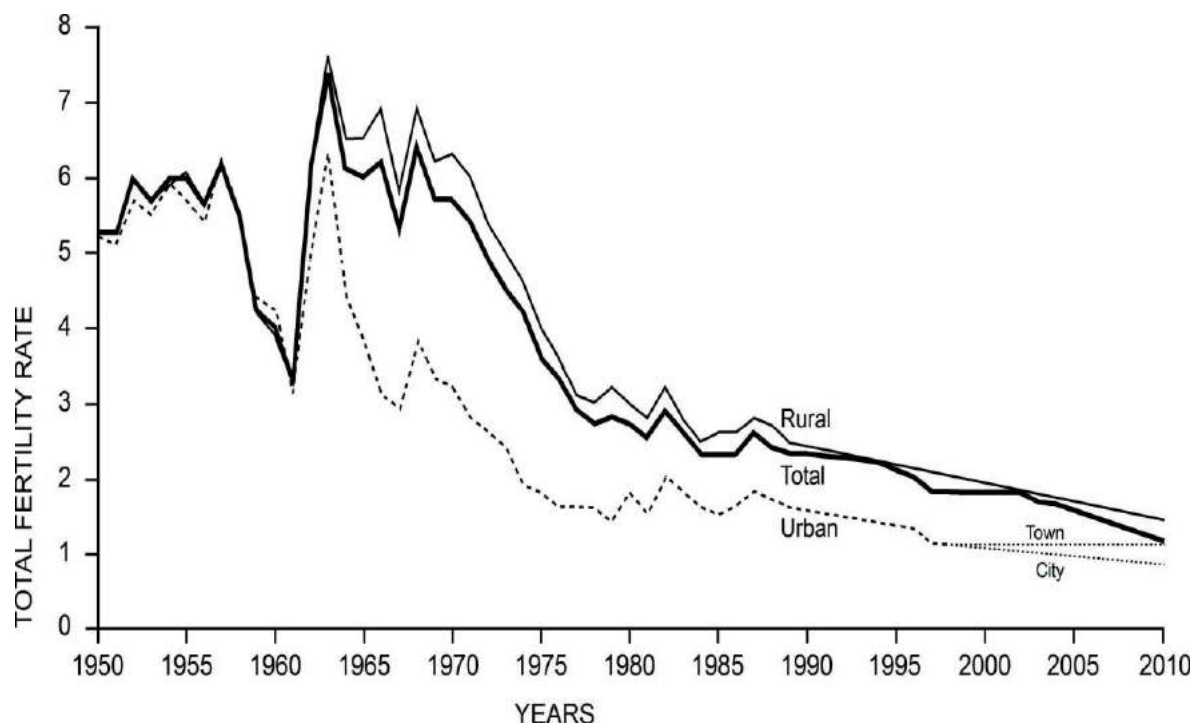
However, this youth bulge which facilitates the demographic dividend is a temporary phenomenon. With time, it becomes part of the older age group which inevitably has an ageing effect on the population. As the urban populations of Asian countries increase rapidly, it is the children born to these urban residents who become a major factor in the growth of those centres. However, an important characteristic of all Asian countries is that, as Table 11 shows, fertility levels are generally significantly lower in urban areas than in rural. This consistent feature of Asian demography has been seen in the past as being largely a function of the educational, income and occupational differentials between urban and rural areas. However, work in Africa (Brockerhoff, 1998) has shown that, even when holding such differences constant, urban fertility is lower indicating that there may be something about urban living and conditions which independently lowers fertility. This may be due, for example, to greater housing pressures; the type of jobs held by women making it more difficult for them to continue working while having young children than if they were living in their villages; difficult patterns of marriage and partnering, or different peer group pressures and influences.

Nowhere in Asia have urban/rural differentials in fertility decline been greater than in China (Lavelly and Freedman, 1990; Yao, 1995; Zhao, 2001). Figure 16 shows that in China’s dramatic fertility decline, the fall has been more spectacular in urban than in rural areas. The urban total fertility rate (TFR) had fallen to 1.13 in the late 1990s while that in Shanghai was 0.87 (Yuan, 2003) – one of the lowest rates in the world.

Table 11: Selected Asia-Pacific Countries: Differences in Total Fertility Rate Between Urban and Rural Areas

Country	Year	Urban	Rural	Percent Lower in Urban Areas
Bangladesh	2011	2.0	2.5	20.0
Cambodia	2010	2.2	3.3	33.3
India	2005–06	2.1	3.0	30.0
Indonesia	2012	2.4	2.8	14.3
Maldives	2009	2.1	2.8	25.0
Nepal	2011	1.6	2.8	42.9
Pakistan	2012–13	3.2	4.2	23.8
Philippines	2013	2.6	3.5	25.7
Sri Lanka	1987	2.1	2.8	25.0
Thailand	1987	1.7	2.4	29.2
Timor-Leste	2009–10	4.9	6.0	18.3
Viet Nam	2002	1.5	2.0	25.0
Papua New Guinea	2006	3.6	4.5	20.0
Solomon Islands	2009	3.0	4.5	33.3
Vanuatu	2009	3.2	4.4	27.3
Kiribati	2010	3.7	3.9	5.1
Marshall Islands	2009–11	3.9	4.5	13.3
Federated States of Micronesia	2010	3.4	3.6	5.6
Nauru	2009–11	4.3		
Fiji	2007	2.3	3.1	25.8
Samoa	2011	4.0	4.9	18.4
Tokelau	2011		4.7	
Tonga	2011	3.5	4.1	14.6

Source: Demographic and Health Surveys, STATcompiler.

Figure 16: China: Total Fertility Rate, 1950–2010

Source: Zhao, 2001; Peng, 2004: 136; 2010 Census of China.

The lower fertility in urban than in rural areas means that, despite most urban areas having a lower mortality rate than rural areas, natural increase *rates* are lower in urban than in rural areas. However, the build-up of massive urban populations means that in many countries the numerical size of natural increase is very large.

Another aspect of the decreased fertility in Asian urban areas, especially where it has fallen well below replacement levels as in China, is the impact on age structure and thus on the size and characteristics of its working population, the demand for health services, social security for the elderly, etc. Table 12 shows the massively changing age structure of the Chinese city of Shanghai demonstrating the impact of the plummeting fertility of the past decades. In 1964, the dependent child age groups (0–14 years) represented 42.3 per cent of the city's total population. This declined rapidly in the 1980s and by 2010 only 8.6 per cent of Shanghai's population was in this age group. On the other hand, the percentage of the 65+ residents increased from 3.6 per cent in 1964 to 11.5 per cent in 2000. Particularly striking, however, was the proportion of the working population that grew from 54.1 per cent to 81.3 per cent between 1964 and 2010. In fact, this change in age structure in Shanghai (and in China) has delivered a marked '*demographic dividend*'. An important issue here is that the pattern of age structure in Shanghai is duplicated across other Asian cities, albeit often in a less spectacular way. It is significant that one of the elements which contribute to Asia's urban areas being an 'engine of growth' in the region is the demographic dividend factor.

Table 12: Change of Age Structure in Shanghai (Per cent)

Year	0–14	15–64	65+
1964	42.31	54.08	3.61
1982	18.15	74.25	7.60
1990	18.23	72.39	9.38
2000	12.26	76.28	11.46
2010	8.61	81.26	10.13

Source: China Population Censuses in 1964, 1982, 1990, 2000 and 2010.

Although Asia's cities will continue to grow, the effects of continued low fertility will be very much felt in the cities. It already has been shown that these nations will record significant ageing of their populations with resultant imbalances between working-age and dependent aging populations. These effects will be greater in cities than elsewhere since in many cases the percentage of the aged population living in urban areas will be greater than that of the total population living in cities. This is due to the fact that there tends to be net migration gains of the 'old-old' population as there is greater availability in larger cities of high order health facilities and specialized housing as well as other care services for the elderly. In addition, aged people often migrate to join their children who have moved to cities. Hence it is important to note that, while overall urban populations in Asia will continue to increase, the balance will deteriorate between their working-age populations and their elderly inhabitants; the workforce itself will age as the effects of fertility decline exacerbate.

The low-fertility and ageing populations of urban areas of Asia would indicate, that other things being equal, they will grow more slowly than national populations. Net migration gain is essential to the demographic, economic and social sustainability of Asian cities. There will be a need for 'replacement migration' to occur. This concept was developed in relation to the needs of low fertility European countries that currently or soon will experience population declines due to continued low fertility with the potential for countries of the South to make up the shortfalls through international migration. It came to particular prominence early in 2000 when the United Nations DESA Population Division (2000) published a report entitled, *'Replacement Migration: Is it a Solution to Declining Aging Populations?'*. It defined 'replacement migration' as 'the international migration that would be needed to offset declines in the size of population, the declines in the population of working age, as well as to offset the overall ageing of the population'. While this report attracted a great deal of comment and criticism when it was published, the 'replacement migration' concept was a useful one because it pointed to the fact that migration was going to play a more significant role in European countries than it had in the past.

In the current context of cities in Asia, it needs to be stressed that internal migration of young people to those cities is replacing the native local young workers who, if fertility would have not declined massively, would be moving into the workforce ages. Internal and international migration to large cities in several Asian countries is in effect providing cities with sufficient numbers of workers needed for their continuing prosperity. Migrants are fundamental to the success of these cities.

POLICIES REGARDING URBANIZATION AND MIGRATION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Several countries in Asia and the Pacific have adopted policies and programmes which attempt to intervene in the processes of urbanization and labour mobility. For much of the 1970s and 1980s, strong anti-urban sentiments prevailed in some governments and international agencies. This saw rapid urban growth as having deleterious effects both in urban areas, through excessive demands being placed on utilities, housing, transport, waste collection, job opportunities, health and education services, etc. and in rural areas through being robbed of their most talented and entrepreneurial people, thus creating a barrier to economic and social development in those areas. This led to a rash of anti-urban policies and programmes such as:

- Some cities were 'closed' so that people who were not registered residents and were detected at check points were evicted from the city. This, for example, was the case of Jakarta in the early 1970s.
- In several large Asian cities squatter settlements, whose inhabitants were frequently migrant workers, were bulldozed.
- In some cities, economic activity favoured by migrant workers was made illegal. This included street vendors and street-based service providers. The informal sector in large cities absorbed the bulk of unskilled incoming migrant workers and programmes sought to close down many such activities.

These anti-urban approaches were also influenced by somewhat romanticized notions of the 'rural way of life' being intrinsically better than life in urban areas. There were elitist views that the 'privileges' of living in the city should not be open to just any citizen who wished to live there. Foreign observers were strongly influenced by contrasts of the superficial, rustic, attractive greenness of villages to the squalor of urban squatter settlements but ignored the fact that people could get work in the city but not in their village.

While much weaker than previously, there are still remnants of this approach in policies such as slum clearance, avoiding slum upgrading because it is seen to 'attract' migrants, and clamping down on some migrant occupations. However, it is being increasingly realized that such policies and programmes, which fly in the face of market forces and initiatives in urban areas, are actually contributing significantly to national development:

- There is considerable 'urban bias' in both public and private investment which means that new job creation is strongly concentrated in sectors (manufacturing and services) that were mainly urban-based. On the other hand, in the agricultural sector, increased commercialisation, mechanisation and replacement of labour inputs with capital inputs were displacing labour.
- In some cases, there were other policy interventions which greatly favoured urban areas. In Indonesia, for example, the Government fixed the price of the staple food, rice, for admirable welfare reasons. However, what this meant was the urban dwellers were able to purchase their basic food at below market prices and farmers were compelled to sell their main product for less than what it was worth. Hence, there was a strong advantage in favour of urban living and a disadvantage to remain in agriculture.
- There are widening differentials between rural and urban areas in service provision, such as in health and education as well as in the availability of electricity and other utilities, which is an important element in rural-to-urban migration.
- Migrant workers in cities are showing a great deal of ingenuity and self-reliance and are not heavily

dependent on governments and institutions but more on social networks based on family or origin linkages. Hence, for the bulk of in-migrants, they obtained their work and housing not through government and formal institutions but through family-based and self-help activity in the informal sector and squatter housing. The migrants were succeeding in the city to obtain work and housing with little or no assistance from the established formal institutions.

A critique of the anti-urban position developed throughout the 1980s and 1990s and was based on several elements including:

- The realisation that there were strong economic gradients between rural and urban areas and that any attempt to dissuade people from moving along them would be difficult and destined to failure.
- There was a growing body of research indicating that the informal sector was not simply a 'sink' which absorbed surplus labour but that it was a major productive element in the urban economy. Moreover, it had important labour absorptive capabilities that greatly facilitated entrance to the labour market. It was also recognised that there was considerable upward mobility in the sector.
- Similarly, research began to show that, with such rapid population growth, it was simply not possible for the formal construction sector to provide sufficient housing that conformed to official restrictions and regulations which would accommodate the growth. 'Self-help' squatter housing often succeeded where the formal construction sector failed. Latin American experience suggested that it was better to adopt a 'site and service' approach with minimal services supplied to squatter areas.
- Another body of research showed that, in Asia, it is not appropriate to have separate 'urban' and 'rural' policies and programmes since there are strong and developing rural/urban ties. There are flows of people, information, finance and goods along these linkages which mean that policies instituted at one end will have impacts on the other. Hence, there is a need when considering intervention to take into account effects in both urban and rural areas.

In most countries, this has led to an abandonment of anti-urban policies, although there are still remnants. Indeed, Jakarta's 'closed city' legislation abandoned in the mid-1970s was revived by the Governor of Jakarta in 2002 (Junaidi, 2002). Currently, however, there are a number of other important elements:

- Firstly, in recognition of the fact that there are increasing pressures on many urban areas in many rural areas, there is growing emphasis on integrated regional, rather than urban, development strategies which self-consciously attempt to reduce the rural/urban economic gradient along which migration occurs. This emphasises decentralization of government activity, investment and decision-making to encourage the growth of employment opportunities in regions. In addition, there are efforts to reduce the differential in service provision in such domains as health, education and electricity. This is often associated with development of devolution and democratization policies.
- Secondly, within urban areas there is less emphasis on policing and placing barriers in the way of migrants being integrated into the urban labour and housing markets. Instead, there is more of an 'accommodationist' approach which accepts:
 - (a) migration to the city will continue;
 - (b) there are insufficient resources to fully provide for migrants.

This approach tends to facilitate migrant integration into the city and build on the self-help and network-based support that already exists. Hence site and service schemes, upgrading of squatter settlements, etc. can improve the accommodation available. Productivity in the informal sector can be enhanced by access, for instance, to loans and training.

While this brief account has overly simplified and generalized a diverse range of approaches to urbanization in Asia over the last four decades, it is no doubt true to say that there has been a general move away from policies and programmes, which seek to act in the opposite direction to market forces and to facilitate positive trends. In the process, there has been a shift away from a concept of urbanization as somehow being unnatural and parasitic toward it being inevitable and integral in improving economic and social wellbeing.

Regional strategies have been put forward for Asia–Pacific urbanization and a few countries have begun to develop their own strategies. One of the most comprehensive strategies is being developed by UNDP (Hildebrand, Kanaley and Roberts, 2013: 51). The vision it proposes is as follows:

‘An Asia–Pacific in which urbanization is managed in a more sustainable way resulting in continuous improvements to economic prosperity, equity, quality of life and well-being for people living and working in towns and cities’.

The strategy builds upon strengthening democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery, and energy and the environment. There is recognition that the strategy is focused on the national level and largest cities. It is apparent, however, that in countries like Indonesia, urbanization is a diffused process and highly decentralized. This presents major challenges to effect improvement because there are wide variations between countries, in cities’ resources, infrastructure, services and quality of governance. The challenge of integrating policies in a cohesive and inclusive way within countries is a crucial ingredient. It is important also not to concentrate only on the economic dimensions, even though they are increasingly becoming the major ‘engine of growth’ of many countries. Policy needs to focus on improving governance, reducing poverty, improving slum areas, addressing environment and energy concerns, having effective systems to cope with crises, and addressing social exclusion issues.

CONCLUSION

Urban areas house more than half of Asia and the Pacific's population while, two generations previously, only one in ten Asians lived in urban areas. This represents a profound change in the way in which Asians live their lives. However, there are many challenges which Asian urbanization presents to policy makers, planners and researchers. One crucial area lies in the arena of data collection and research. Planning for efficiency and equity in Asian cities requires timely and relevant research. However, in Asia, as elsewhere, conceptualization and definition of urban areas has remained mired in the thinking of the 1970s and does not capture the nature of contemporary dynamic urban systems. Moreover, data collection systems are based on large areas while modern technology facilitates small building block units for censuses and other data collection which in turn allows a flexible and appropriate definition of urban boundaries. Sound planning and governance of urban centres in Asia require better delineation of boundaries and of appropriate specifically disaggregated data within those boundaries. Moreover, research in urban areas needs to be integrated so that an understanding of the dynamics of population change in urban areas may be achieved.

While there is variation between Asian cities in the extent of fertility decline and ageing, there can be no doubt that in several major cities in the region, especially those in China, considerable challenges will be experienced, especially:

- A reduction in the number of local young people entering the workforce;
- A rapid growth in the elderly population and their ratio to the replacement working-age population.

Migration, from internal and, to a lesser extent, international sources, will be essential to the sustainability of those cities which are most strongly affected. There is no doubt that the proportion of residents of major cities in several Asian nations, who are in-migrants and immigrants, is likely to continue to increase. This, however, is not simply a function of 'replacement migration'. There are a number of processes operating to increase migration, both internal and international, in Asia. Moreover, that migration is disproportionately directed toward major cities will continue because the labour markets to which migrants predominantly move are found in those centres. The forces of globalization and economic restructuring, which are reshaping the economic and social as well as physical form of Asia's major cities of northern nations, have included an important population movement component. Indeed, an increased volume of international migration has been identified as one of the key defining characteristics of world cities (Friedmann, 1986) and global cities (Sassen, 1991).

Asian cities have undergone substantial demographic change in the last decade and these trends seem likely to continue over the next two decades. These changes are interrelated with social, economic and political transformations occurring in those cities and have ensuing implications. The shifts can be summarized as follows:

- The overall growth of urban populations will be slower than in the past half-century but will continue at a significantly higher rate than that of national populations.
- The working-age population will stabilise because of low fertility, meaning the number of local people moving into the working-age range will decrease.
- The aged population will increase substantially, creating significant pressure on pension schemes, health services, etc.
- The distinctive residential pattern of aged populations will be progressively evident in northern cities and the services they require will account for an increased proportion of the workforce.

- Ageing of the population will result in different demands for transport, housing, retail services, human services, etc.
- There will be increased levels of female participation in the urban workforce and an increase in the average age of retirement.

The future of these cities will depend to a large degree on the extent to which immigration can compensate for the slow local growth (or decline) of the workforce and ageing. Much will, therefore, depend on the policies at city, regional and national levels toward migration, both internal and international. Currently policies which are effectively anti-migration and anti-migrant are in place throughout much of Asia. Migration is too often seen as a temporary necessity rather than a crucial long-term structural feature of those cities. Emphasis is upon stopping migration altogether or restricting it in a variety of ways. Yet migration is crucial to both the short-term and especially the longer term sustainability of those cities. The need is for policies which accept this reality and hence facilitate the flow of migrants and protect their rights as being important contributors to the prosperity of cities. Not only policies as to who may enter a country or city need therefore to be reconsidered but also those relating to newcomers settling in cities on a permanent or temporary basis. Too often migrants are unfairly and negatively stereotyped or made scapegoats for cities' problems like crime, health, pressure on services and environmental degradation. They need to be seen as being significant, indeed in being increasingly significant, to the long term sustainability of those cities. However, development of appropriate policies with respect to migrants and migration needs to be based upon an understanding of the relevant migration processes. This understanding can be an important separate tool which urban policymakers and planners can use to not just accommodate rapid demographic change but also to meet it head on and initiate interventions to maximise its potential benefits and minimise its negative impacts.

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