

# STERNATIONAL HANDBOOK HANDBOOK OF URBAN SYSTEMS

STUDIES OF URBANIZATION AND MIGRATION IN ADVANCED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Edited by **H.S. Geyer** 

# International Handbook of Urban Systems

Studies of Urbanization and Migration in Advanced and Developing Countries

Edited by

H. S. Geyer

Professor of Regional Planning, Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Potchefstroom

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H. S. Geyer August, 2002.

#### Preface

The original idea of an edited volume reflecting urban changes that have occurred in selected countries over the past half century, was inspired by the writings of H.G. Wells. Judging from improvements in communication technology a century ago, and mixing fact with a good measure of common sense and creative thinking, H.G. Wells (1902) anticipated great changes in urban development during the twentieth century. The following collage of quotations from his book, in italics, highlights what he foresaw.

Firstly, he predicted that advances in the technology of the combustion engine, which led to developments such as the private motor car, short and long haul trucking and bus services – all of which were designed to improve the transportation of goods, material and people in and between cities – would ultimately result in the development of giant cities. Although George Gissing, the nineteenth century novelist and good friend of Wells, stated that giant cities such as London were little more than attractive, tumultuous whirlpools that ultimately would be 'spinning down to death', Wells was much more optimistic. Based on his assessment of the effect new advances in transport technology on land, sea and in the sky would have on urban development, Wells predicted that these new forces, at present still so potently centripetal in their influence, bring with them, the distinct promise of a centrifugal application that may be finally equal to the complete reduction of all our present congestions.

The passion for nature, a house in its own garden, the healthful-ness of the country, and the wholesome isolation that is possible from much that irritates in cities, he listed as important centrifugal attractions that would cause cities to expand into giant cities. On the other hand, the greater convenience of locations close to schools and shopping facilities, department stores which collectively establish a sort of monopoly of suburban trade by providing a variety of products from some one vast indiscriminate shop or store full of respectable mediocre goods, and the love of the crowd, the dress, and the crush, as well as the hot passion for the promenade are listed as centripetal attractions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See George Gissing's classic book *The Whirlpool*.

Where great cities of the nineteenth century presented rounded contours that grew like puff-ball swells, the modern city of his time became star shaped, thrusting out arms along every available railway line. They looked like something that has burst an intolerable envelope and splashed. Referring to these two forms of urban deconcentration, first pushing out towards the fringes of the city and, later on, also along connecting roads between cities, he said: To the subsidiary centres will be drawn doctor and school-master, and various dealers in fresh provisions, baker, grocer and butcher. Along the new roads will be way-side restaurants and tea-houses, and motor and cycle stores and repair places. These coming cities will not be, in the old sense, cities at all; they will present a new and entirely different phase of human distribution.

Each great city, according to Wells, is sustained by the trade and production of a certain proportion of the world's surface – by the area it commands commercially. However, he anticipated an end to urban growth. Even if we allowed for considerable increase in the production of food stuffs in the future, it still remains inevitable that the increase of each city in the world must come at last upon arrest.

Communication, he suggested, shall remain pivotal in urban development. The general distribution of population in a country must always be directly dependent on transport facilities. In fact, the position and the population limit of towns are, according to him, determined by strategic considerations – in a word, communications.

Considering the effect people's increasing mobility will have on long-term migration trends in England, he summarized the broad features of the redistribution of people during the nineteenth century, as an unusual growth of great cities coupled with a tendency to depopulation in the country. In his vision of the development of vast megalopolitan areas, he did not regard it as far-fetched that the London citizen of the year 2000 A.D. may have a choice of nearly all England and Wales south of Nottingham and east of Exeter as his suburb, and that the vast stretch of country from Washington to Albany will be all of it 'available' to the active citizen of New York and Philadelphia before that date.

These were the visions of Wells at the beginning of the twentieth century, and these same issues are fascinating scholars of urban change today, and will continue to do so in the years ahead. Although the urbanization trends described by Wells continued for many decades, and by the 1960s were expected to continue for much longer, very significant changes in the urban environment had occurred by the end of that decade. A turnaround from urbanization to polarization reversal and later to counter-urbanization was observed in the migration trends of a number of Developed Countries by the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s. During the same period signs of concentration forces beginning to yield to deconcentration forces, were also found in certain Advanced Developing Countries. Later on, during the

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1980s, the counter-urbanization trends in certain Developed Countries suddenly and unexpectedly started to subside. In certain cases the second turnaround seems to continue, in others it seems to be short-lived and one may, once again, see the return of fully fledged counter-urbanization.

Sufficient time has now passed since the last concerted efforts were made to reflect back on the duration of each of these phases of urban development in the Developed and Developing World. Questions that need to be investigated are: what long-term migration trends are visible in Developed and Developing Countries in different parts of the world; which factors have been playing an important role in these migration trends in the maturation of urban systems over the years; and what are the consequences of these trends for the future? Addressing these issues is the aim of this book.

Specific questions that are being addressed in the book include: first, what are the similarities and differences in the duration of the phases of urban development that have occurred in Developed Countries and second, how do these phases differ from those occurring in Advanced Developing Countries? Of particular interest are the forces that cause these cycles of population concentration and deconcentration in Developed and Advanced Developing Countries and, especially, the role main and under-current migration streams play in these long-term fluctuations.

The book is divided into two parts. The purpose of the first part is threefold. An introductory chapter defines and explains relevant concepts by moving systematically through the basic ideas and general principles in urban systems analysis. The following two chapters give the current status of views on migration theory and urban systems. Although the first of these two chapters focuses more on the Developing World and the latter on issues in the Developed World, the sets of issues are not mutually exclusive. Some of the issues prevalent in the Developed World also apply to the Developing World, and vice versa, especially those regarding migration theory. Finally, insight gained from views expressed by contributors on current and future trends in migration and in urban maturation are brought together in the final chapter of the first part of the book. Where the first three chapters of Part One deal with the past, the last chapter is concerned with what lies ahead.

Because a wide spectrum of topics is relevant in a study of this nature, not all concepts and principles could be explained in detail in Part One of the book nor is the book intended to serve as an introduction to this field. Students at the under-graduate level who are reading the first three chapters are therefore advised to do some additional reading. For this reason the second and third chapters contain an extensive list of references on each topic that is discussed. Those students who follow this advice will be richly rewarded because as they work their way through the references an intricate but fascinating world will unfold.

In Part Two, a number of prominent researchers are given the opportunity to express their views on the evolution of urban development in a selection of

Developed and Advanced Developing Countries. It is hoped that the inclusion of Developed and Developing Countries in the same study will help overcome the problem of compartmentalization that has plagued research in this field for so many years.

In the chapters in Part Two, an evaluation is first given of the history of urban development trends of each country. Chapters in this part of the book refer to functional urban sub-systems. These include the identification of primary cities and the lower order (intermediate- and small-sized) centres that are functionally related to these primary cities. Sequences in the development of different groups of cities over time are depicted by a geographical analysis of migration gains and losses in these urban sub-systems. Collectively, the study results contained in the case studies in the second part of the book give an insight into the possible longer-term consequences main and sub-stream migration hold for future urban development, and this information may open up new areas for further research.

Based on the selection of themes and the way in which the material was handled by the contributors, the audience should include scholars in the fields of geography, planning, regional studies, economics, social science, history, architecture and public administration. The book will be of interest to underand post-graduate students as well as advanced researchers in these fields.

Manie Geyer August, 2002.

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