

# Mega Cities and Rural to Urban Migration

## Definitions:

A **megacity** is a city with a population of more than 10 million people living in it. During the 1960s there were only 2 known megacities however there are currently 34 in the world today.

A **world city** is a city with major economic or political power. Examples are New York City (also a megacity) and Paris (not a megacity)

A **slum** is an urban settlement in which, according to the United Nations, over 50% of inhabitants lack one or more of the following: housing and amenities e.g. clean water, sanitation, etc. Areas of slum housing built from waste are known as **shanty towns**, illegally occupying land means it is a **squatter settlement**.

**Urban growth** is growth in the physical size of a city, and is different from urbanisation

**Urban sprawl** is when urban areas grow outwards, usually in an uncontrolled way into surrounding rural land. Developing countries have high levels of this in the form of illegal slum growth.

**Suburbanisation** occurs when the wealthy choose to live on the city edge to escape poverty, crime, congestion and pollution. It is most common in Latin America and Africa for these areas to be gated.

**Counterurbanisation** - the movement of people out of cities into rural areas

**Reurbanisation** occurs when attempts are made to regenerate areas of the city that has declined.

## Why urban cities grow into megacities:

1. Natural growth (high birth rate, low death rate) - 60%
2. Rural to urban migration - 30%

Rural to urban migration is the biggest way in which megacities grow. A range of pull factors mean that people want to move to cities in order to get housing, better jobs, services and schools. This causes the birth rate to increase because many women of child bearing age enter the city causing the high birth rate.

## Megacities Classification:

1. *Level of development* - many of Asia's cities are centres of wealth whilst Africa's are poor
2. *Type migrant* - some migrants are young and skilled whilst others are poor and unskilled
3. *Growth Factors* - cities can be growing due to migration and internal growth
4. *Planning* - many Asian cities are beginning to plan their growth
5. *Rate of population growth* - varies from 2-4% per year in Latin America cities to 4-8% in African cities

## CASE STUDY: Chongqing, China

Chongqing is located downstream from the Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River, within the mid to central region of east China. Due to the location next to the river and its good transport means it pulls many migrants in annually from rural areas (8.5 million annually)

## Key Facts:

- Chongqing contains more than 4.1 million people but the urban areas housed a huge 31.5 million people in 2005.
- 300 million rural Chinese people now live in cities
- There are more than 90 cities with more than 1 million people in
- Over 1,300 rural-urban migrants arrive in the city each day.
- Urban economic growth of £7 million a day
- Total population growing by 500,000 each year
- Average income rose by 66% between 2000 and 2005 to £730 per year which is 3 times the rural average.

## Causes:

- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from TNCs has meant lots of factories have opened in urban areas creating new jobs
- Technologies and transport links spread knowledge to rural areas about opportunities in urban areas.

