

Settlements

Rural settlements

- **Dispersed settlements** = individual houses and farms are widely scattered throughout the countryside
- **Nucleated settlements** = houses and buildings are tightly clustered around a central feature (church, crossroads, etc.)
- Nowadays, rural settlements (villages, municipalities) undergo tremendous changes than ever before.
- This is due to many spatial processes:
 - *depopulation*
 - *changing agricultural land base*
 - *counterurbanisation*
 - *long-distance commuting*
 - *construction of new roads, highways, airports*
- **Second homes** = specialised forms of holiday accommodation in remote rural areas beyond the travelling limit for weekend recreation.
- Second homes (buildings, houses) are owned by urban population
 - e.g. people from a capital move regularly to distant rural regions to spend a weekend (holidays) there
- Why do people own their rural residences?
- Because of:
 - visual attractiveness – high quality of landscape
 - closeness to water
 - closeness to forests
 - clean air
 - pleasant natural environment
 - no noise or city stress

Urban settlements

- **Urbanisation** = an increase in the percentage of a population living in urban areas = 1 of the most significant geographical phenomena in the 1900s.
- Different criteria for classification of **urban areas**:
 - Iceland – 2,000 inh.
 - Japan – 30,000 inh.
- Urban area has *typical characteristics*:
 - population size and population density
 - presence of CBD and residential zones
 - dominant economic activities
 - e.g. manufacturing industry, services, etc.
 - administrative function
- **Inner city** = the area surrounding the CBD => the zone of transition (ghettos)
- Main *features of inner cities*:
 - old, poor quality housing
 - lack of recreational space and lack of services
 - high unemployment, high rates of immigrants
 - crime (graffiti, racial conflicts)
 - racial conflicts
 - air and noise pollution + road congestions
- In Europe, many people live in city suburbs => **Suburbanisation** = movement of people from inner cities to suburbs within a city (esp. before the WWII) ⇔
 - *transport improvements* (trams and trains)
 - *average incomes were higher* (lower unempl.)
 - *medical standards had improved* (more hospitals)
 - *new housing regulations* (new houses built in suburbs to eliminate overpopulated city parts)
- **Counterurbanisation** = the movement of people to further distances from a city, to more rural areas
 - e.g. smaller municipalities, villages
- = takes place mostly in developed world:
 - *higher personal mobility* (cars, buses, trains)
 - *people become richer* (can afford)

- *decentralisation of industries*
- *lower prices for plots and estates*
- *clean and fresh environment*
- Since **1945** – widespread migration of population from developing countries
 - => 20 million Hispanics in the USA
 - => 15 million Black immigrants in Europe
 - => 3 million Muslims in France
- This leads to **segregation** and creation of ghettos, slums, increasing poverty etc.
- *Religious segregation*
 - e.g. Northern Ireland (Catholics vs. Protestants)
- **Green belts** = possibility in urban planning „to eliminate the spread of towns by zones of country land“
- 1940s and 1950s = Greater London Plan:
 - artificially planted forests and grasses
- => cities can´t spread, only beyond the green belt, i.e. formation of new towns (in the past) and **diffusion of population into smaller towns** and rural areas
- Problems in urban areas:
 - *increased demand for housing* ⇔ *changes in population structure*
 - i.e. increased number of single people, divorced, elderly and unmarried couples
 - *mostly richer people move from the town*
 - i.e. majority of remaining population is poorer than normally
- Problems in urban areas:
 - *decline of local shopping centres* ⇔ *growth of superstores*
 - i.e. shops decline, become shabby => lack of neighbourhood´s sense of community and attractivity
 - *loss of health, leisure and other community facilities*
 - i.e. centralisation of hospitals
 - *out-dated public transport*

Urbanisation in developing countries (LDCs)

- Since 1945 = rapid *increase of urbanisation in LDCs*
 - e.g. in Latin America, Africa and SE Asia
- Rural to urban migration continues also nowadays ⇔ more opportunities compared to countryside
- => problems with:
 - housing and unemployment
 - bazaar economy, i.e. small trade, craft workshops
 - street economy, i.e. shoe-shiners, beggars, thieves and prostitutes
 - crime and drug trade, i.e. cocaine + soft drugs especially in Latin America
- Serious problem = urban hunger
 - i.e. severe malnutrition and food shortage
- The number of people living in cities has doubled since 1990 and reached 1 billion in 2000
 - Example: Dhaka = growing by 150,000 people annually and about 13,000 people a day
- As a result of this huge migration to cities = **slums** – the poorest parts of world cities (Brazil, India, etc.)

Keywords

- rural/urban settlements, dispersed/nucleated settlements, cluster, depopulation, commuting, second homes
- urbanisation, CBD, residential zones, inner city, road congestion, suburbanisation, counterurbanisation, segregation, green belts, diffusion of population, superstores, community facilities, out-dated public transport
- bazaar and street economy, urban hunger, slums