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Beijing International Model United Nations 2021

Background Guide

United Nations
Human Settlements Programme
(UN-Habitat)

Topic A: Addressing Urban Inequalities: Exclusion,
Deprivation and Marginalization
Topic B: Sustainable and Inclusive Development
for Conurbation

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Welcome Letter

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) of Beijing International Model United Nations 2021. The Directors of UN-Habitat would like to express our sincerest welcome to all the delegates for your participation.

Urban areas, the home to almost half of the world's total population, creating over 80% of the global GDP, are now facing crisis.¹ Half of the world's urban population is deprived of convenient access to public transportations and other related social services.² Meanwhile, the share of the urban population living in slums rose to 24% in 2018, and the number is still climbing year by year.³

In the past decade, people have thought about solutions to address those deeply rooted city maladies. The solution they have come up with is to construct satellite cities. However, unorganized satellite cities and the continuous urban sprawl have failed to live up to expectations. Coordinating the development of satellite cities with the core cities is also crucial for a balanced development of urban areas.

This year, UN-Habitat will adopt the latest Beijing Rules of Procedure (Motion-oriented). By promoting more sustainable and inclusive cities and urban areas development, we will help implement the 2030 sustainable development agenda and contribute to 17 sustainable development goals.

The Background Guide, aiming at offering guidance, only provides a limited amount of information concerning the topic. Meanwhile, your own research on the country's status quo and standpoints, as well as the research on the problems to be solved and the possible solutions, are necessary and important.

Best Regards,
Directors of United Nations Human Settlements Programme
Beijing International Model United Nations 2021

1 UN-Habitat, Home Page, UN-Habitat, accessed Jan 15, 2021, <https://unhabitat.org>.

2 ECOSOC, "SDG-Goal 11", ECOSOC, accessed Jan 15, 2021, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal11>.

3 Ibid.

Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme, also known as UN-Habitat, is the United Nations Programme for human settlements and sustainable urban development. It was mandated by the United Nations General Assembly in 1978 as one of the products of the first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements and Sustainable Urban Development, also known as Habitat 1.⁴ The missions carried by UN-Habitat are promoting sustainable and inclusive development of cities and providing adequate shelter for all. Its primary work is to provide expertise, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative actions. Currently, the network of UN-Habitat extends to more than 90 countries throughout the world.⁵

As people are stepping into the third decade of the 21st century, UN-Habitat has made new attempts to cope with the challenges in the new era. In the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2023, the organization will reposition itself from a think tank to a thought leader and active participant in global affairs.⁶ In that manner, the strategic plan sets four “domains of change” as guidelines for future work (see Figure 1).

By working closely with its partners, and through its normative and operational work, as well as its collaboration with other branches of the United Nations system, UN-Habitat aims to advance sustainable urbanization as the main driver of inclusive development and long-lasting peace of the world, to improve living conditions for all stakeholders in the new era.



Figure 1 Four “Domains of Change”⁷

⁴ UN-Habitat, “overview”, UN-Habitat, accessed Jan 15, 2021, <https://unhabitat.org/about-us>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ UN-Habitat, *The Strategic Plan 2020-2023*, UN-Habitat, accessed Jan 15, 2021, https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-09/strategic_plan_2020-2023.pdf, Para.15.

⁷ Ibid.

Introduction to the Topics

In the past decade, the debate over inequalities within our society has stormed back into academia though it was temporarily marginalized after the civil unrest in the US back in the 60s. As it is proven true by history, the industrial revolutions might be one of the reasons for an increasingly divided society. As now mankind is standing on the brink of the fourth industrial revolution, all stockholders are at the heart of addressing inequalities in such rapidly changing course of societal development. As the breeding ground for development and inequalities, cities are the primary entity of concern.

As information technology is primarily city-based, it has created a new special inequality within and between cities. As a result, income gaps have widened, and run-down neighborhood continues to deteriorate.⁸ Such a phenomenon is not exclusive to developing countries. From highly developed regions to countries that have just started their course of urbanization, urban inequalities are deeply rooted in every country.

People primarily see the city as a complex of all sorts of opportunities. However, the distribution of the opportunities and the merits of development are not equally shared within the urban area. Nonetheless, people of all ages are coming to the cities wishing to find a place of their own. Soon enough, the population has well exceeded the capacity of the city. The process of accumulating population started back in the last century and is still continuing today. The problem's initial solutions are to build as many satellite cities as possible. However, as time went by, the core cities and the satellite cities became functionally integrated but physically separated, creating another problem for urbanization planners.

Just like the inequalities between the city residents, the inequalities and lack of coordination between core cities and their surrounding secondary cities also impede the sustainable and inclusive development of the whole conurbation. Meanwhile, the solutions to both of the topics are long overdue.

⁸ Jan Nijman and Yehua Dennis Wei, “Urban Inequalities in the 21st Century Economy” , *Applied Geography*, No.117 (2020): 102188.

Key Terms

Exclusion

Exclusion is closely related to other social concepts, which is often used to denote a similar situation, for example, poverty and inaccessibility. In the past, people merely define it as the substitute for poverty. However, the contemporary social study sees beyond this narrow definition. In 2011, famous American sociologist Andrew Fischer argued that the debate over exclusion provides a wider range of different perspectives that often transcend the lack of social resources.⁹ In that manner, exclusion is thereby defined as “the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities available to the majority of people in a society.”¹⁰

Marginality

Similar to the term “exclusion,” the study of marginality also accounts for a huge proportion of urban studies. In the narrow sense, exclusion and marginality share the same historical root, which emphasizes underdevelopment, lack of resources, and distance, however, in more recent urban studies, marginality parts with exclusion in both theory and reality. Unlike the study of exclusion, which surrounds the hierarchical system of the society, the study of marginality focuses on the relations between different communities of the urban area. In a general sense, taken a geographical point of view, the study of the marginality of today is established as a complicated complex that covers aspects of underdevelopment, political disadvantages, and most importantly, the insufficient integration between different communities, which emphasis on cultural isolation and dependency.

Conurbation & Core Cities & Secondary Cities

A conurbation means a city area that consists of several different cities and large towns. Because of urbanization, the boundaries of each city area are now overlapping with each other, but they still maintain some independence in terms of functionality and dynamism. Unlike a metropolitan area, conurbation focuses on a region that is much smaller. A conurbation usually has a complex core, which is often referred to as the core city, while the cities surrounding it are often referred to as secondary cities. Besides traditional urbanization, conurbation can also be formed through the plans and construction of satellite cities.

⁹ Andrew Fischer, “Reconceiving Social Exclusion,” BWPI Working Paper 146, Brooks World Poverty Institute, Manchester.

¹⁰ Matthias Bernt and Laura Colini, “Exclusion, Marginalization and Peripheralization: Conceptual Concerns in the Study of Urban Inequalities”, *Leibniz Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning*, www.irs-net.de/download/wp-exclusion-marginalization-peripheralization.

From the perspective of municipal government, different forming processes of the conurbation may result in different forms of government. Primarily, scholars have concluded the problems existing in regional governance of conurbation into two different types of government, which are respectively gigantic governance and polycentric governance. Gigantic governance is used to describe the governance of conurbations formed by the construction of satellite cities. Polycentric governance most possibly happens in the conurbations formed by overlapped city boundaries. Different municipal governments often require different approaches when dealing with regional development. The two forms of government will be discussed in detail in the latter part.

Satellite Cities

Satellite Cities most often refer to the newly planned cities surrounding an existing large city. The purpose of which is to solve the urban problems of the core city and raise the region's competitiveness. Van Leynseele and Bontje described satellite cities as the new frontier of urbanization and property investment.¹¹ Meanwhile, they also highlighted the problem of bridging the gaps between the planned and the reality of building satellite cities.¹² Satellite cities of today have presented a dual-image. On the one hand, triumph stories of satellite cities in relieving the pressure of the core cities are everywhere. On the other hand, a considerable proportion of satellite cities has become the waste dump for the core cities and has deteriorated into the so-called inferior cities. Today, most satellite cities have become functionally entangled with the core city but, nonetheless, physically separated from the core cities and are excluded from the development benefits of the core cities.

¹¹ Marco Bontje, “Shenzhen: satellite city or city of satellites?” , *International Planning Studies*, 2019, DOI: 10.1080/13563475.2019.1657383

¹² Ibid.

Topic A: Addressing Urban Inequalities: Exclusion, Deprivation and Marginalization

Current Situation

I. Overview of Current Situation

As the center of the world's economic growth and development, urban areas are also breeding inequalities. In urban areas, there is a surge in the number of people living in urban slums who are more vulnerable as they are bearing the cost of city life while living in a deprived community.¹³ According to an early study conducted by UN-Habitat in 2012, an estimated number of 850 million urban dwellers live in slums and ghettos, which, if left unchecked, will rise to 3 billion by the year 2050.¹⁴

However, poverty is merely a fraction of urban inequalities. Contemporary urban inequalities can be viewed from three dimensions – exclusion, deprivation, and marginalization – which focus on three specific aspects of the present-day urban issues. From the standpoint of exclusion, the lack of rights, goods, and services are blocking a considerable amount of people's way to achieve self-fulfillment. As for deprivation, the wealth and social resources of the cities are unevenly concentrated in the hands of the privileged groups due to exploitation of the underprivileged groups, denial of adequate income, and proper investment. Finally, marginalization is often related to the division between the mainstream and the marginalized groups triggered by the sense of superiority of the indigenous city residents, the privileges enjoyed by the dominant race, and the discriminative government policies.

Meanwhile, other factors are also reinforcing the status quo of the urban inequalities. From the expanding urban population and unplanned urban expansion to the biased layout of urban structure, these macroscopic concepts are also negatively reinforcing the integration of communities and the inclusive development of the cities.

¹³ Michael Spence, Patricia Clarke Annez and Robert M. Buckley, “The Commission on Growth and Development”, *Urbanization and Growth* (2009), Washington DC: The World Bank.

¹⁴ UN-Habitat and IIED, “Post-2015 Global Thematic Consultation on Urban inequalities: Final Discussion Summary”, 2013, access date Jan 16, 2021, <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/node/287100>.

II. Past Actions

a) Domestic Efforts

Attempts have been made both through bottom-up and top-down approaches to address the demands of the urban residents. Yet past experience has shown that governmental actions are required for sustained results. In Kigali and Rwanda, in order to address the problem of exclusion, the regional government has promised to provide basic access to water and sanitation facilitations for free by installing government-sponsored water tanks in slums and other deprived neighborhoods.¹⁵ Similarly, countries like China and the Philippines also see the importance of improving vulnerable neighborhoods' living standards. Renovation projects of old communities and run-down neighborhoods are put forward across the two countries.¹⁶ In developing economies like India, the municipal government of Delhi has set up shelters and food distribution points to stop rural migrants from pouring into the city that is already at capacity.¹⁷ To tackle the problem of marginalization, nationwide policies have been adopted in the US. Affirmative action, though entangled with controversy, has significantly reduced the poverty rate (from 35% to 25%) and the per capita income (20% increase) of the black families compared with the situation in 1965 when it was introduced.¹⁸ However, the income gap is still widening, which is much more acute in cities.

b) Universal Progress

As one of the global collaboration centers, UN-Habitat works diligently with the local authority in Nairobi, Kenya, to provide handwashing facilities in informal settlements. In the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 of UN-Habitat, it named four domains of change, which are reducing special inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum, enhanced share prosperity of cities and regions, strengthened climate actions, and improved urban environment and effective urban crisis prevention and response.¹⁹ With the first two objectives, UN-Habitat sets eyes on solving inequality not only between city residents but also between different cities and regions. In Fiji, an island country, UN-Habitat has cooperated with its national and local government to coordinated urban climate change and reduce the impact of global warming on the informal settlements of urban areas.²⁰ The four-year project with a budget of 4.2 million dollars has been carried out in 16 informal settlements in four major urban areas of Fiji.²¹

15 Jillian Du, Robin King and Radha Chanchani, "Tackling Inequality in Cities is Essential for Fighting COVID-19", *World Resource Institute*, access date Jan 16, 2021, <https://www.wri.org/blog/2020/04/coronavirus-inequality-cities>.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Brandon Gaille, "25 Important Statistics on Affirmative Action in the Workplace", *Brandongaille*, accessed Feb 19, 2021 <https://brandongaille.com/24-important-statistics-on-affirmative-action-in-the-workplace/>.

19 UN-Habitat, *The Strategic Plan 2020-2023*, UN-Habitat, accessed Jan 16, 2021, https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-09/strategic_plan_2020-2023.pdf.

20 UN-Habitat, "RISE-UP: Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor", *UN-Habitat*, accessed Feb 19, 2021 <https://unhabitat.org/programme/rise-up-resilient-settlements-for-the-urban-poor>.

21 Ibid.

Similarly, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is also working closely with its local partners in studying urban inequalities. Back in 2012, UNDP has drafted policy guidance for addressing urban poverty and vulnerability for the Asia-Pacific region, which is thought to be the embodiment of polarized development. In the policy guidance, UNDP highlighted the importance of formalizing the tenure of informal residence in developing areas, which is considered as the first step of the slums upgrade and the stop of deterioration.²² Further, UNDP has also launched the Human Development Report on inequality, which focused greatly on urban inequality aiming to meet the ambition of leaving no one behind in the course of development.²³

²² UNDP and UN-Habitat, “Addressing Urban Poverty, Inequality, and Vulnerability in a Warming World”, 2013, accessed Jan 15, 2021, ISBN no. 978-974-680-362-5, https://www.fukuoka.unhabitat.org/programmes/ccci/pdf/1_Addressing_Urban_Poverty_Inequality_and_Vulnerability_in_a_Warming_World.pdf.

²³ Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, “Addressing the root causes of inequality”, UNDP, Posted on May 31, 2019, accessed Jan 16, 2021. <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2019/addressing-the-root-causes-of-inequality.html>.

Problems to be Solved

I. Overpopulation and Unplanned Urbanization

a) Overloaded Population

In the past few decades, the urban population has been growing at a high speed. According to the World Bank, from 2000 to 2019, the world's urban population rocketed from 2.854 billion to 4.274 billion.²⁴ Although big cities across the world have quickly expanded in size, increased by 1.8-fold from 1990 to 2015 in total, the huge population inflow still exceeds the city's development, resulting in overpopulation in major cities.²⁵ Such a dense population will certainly influence the daily function of the city and lead to a series of urban diseases.

To start with, the housing shortage has become increasingly acute, as demand exceeds the supply in the real estate market, resulting in the soaring housing price. In this case, the unaffordable housing cost is forcing people to look for alternatives, reducing their living standards. In 2018, there were still 29.245% of the urban population living in urban slums across the globe, and the number of which is continuously rising.²⁶ With such a high percentage of urban residents unable to afford adequate housing, the sustainability of the city was put at risk.

Overpopulation also leads to the traditional hazard from traffic congestion to overloaded public transport. Other problems such as rising crime rate, environmental pollution, and public facilities shortage are also caused by the excessive urban population. Limited social resources intensified the competition in urban lives, and those at a disadvantage may eventually be forced to obtain the necessities via illicit methods, pushing up the urban crime rate.

Urban pollution is yet another prime concern for policymakers and city residents. Research shows that 33% of the world's wastes are disposed of by open dumps, which certainly generates pollution to soil, water and threatens the ecosystem.²⁷ Due to the dense urban population and the high number of private cars, urban commuting generated thousands of tons of waste gases which troubled urban residents and threatened their health.

²⁴ World Bank, "Urban population," The World Bank, accessed Jan 20, 2021, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL?view=chart>.

²⁵ UNHABITAT, "World Cities Report 2020: The Value of Sustainable Urbanization," page 17, accessed Jan 22, 2021, <https://unhabitat.org/World%20Cities%20Report%202020>.

²⁶ World Bank, "Population living in slums (% of urban population)" , The World Bank, accessed Jan 20, 2021, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.POP.SLUM.UR.ZS>.

²⁷ World Bank, "Trends in Solid Waste Management," The World Bank, accessed Jan 20, 2021, https://datatopics.worldbank.org/what-a-waste/trends_in_solid_waste_management.html.

b)Unplanned Urbanization

The problem of unplanned urban development is common in cities around the world. Meanwhile, the situation in developed countries and developing countries are rather different.

In most developed countries, they have gone through the phase of rapid urbanization back in the first and second industrial revolutions. Back then, urban planners lacked both means and experience to organize the rapidly expanding city. A typical example might be the city of Glasgow. The development of Glasgow rests on the up-rise of shipbuilding. The booming industry pushed forward the development of the city, but when it fell as a result of the rising competitors on the continent, it also brought the whole city into depression.²⁸ Many people lost their jobs when those industries had moved elsewhere, and the facilities once supporting the shipbuilding industry were abolished. Meanwhile, the urban layout that was primarily aimed to facilitate the development of the shipbuilding industry appeared to be messy and eventually blocked the further development of the city.

In developing countries, though there are plenty of lessons, most of them still fall into the trap of unplanned urbanization nevertheless. To achieve the maximum economic benefit in the short term, some developing countries have adopted a path that prioritizes urbanization and use urbanization to concentrate cheap labor. In the short term, the economic benefit is definitely enormous. However, there is a price to pay in the years to come. The following Case Study of the Mexico City may serve as an example of the negative consequence of unplanned urbanization.

c)Case Study: Low-Quality Urbanization—Mexico City

The urbanization rate in Mexico reached 80% in 2019, which is similar to the urbanization rate of many developed countries.²⁹ As the largest city in Mexico, Mexico City is home to more than 2 million people.³⁰ But, with such a rapid development of urbanization, residents' living standards are not guaranteed.

Mexico has encouraged many rural residents to migrate to cities to provide cheap labor to enhance industrial development. However, those who were tempted into the so-called glamorous future couldn't properly fit in the city life, as most of them were doing underpaid jobs. Meanwhile, the number of people pouring into the city went beyond the need of the city. The poor ended up in negative competitions with their peers for those underpaid jobs, which only serves the interests of the employers.

In that case, with the advancement of urbanization in Mexico City, the gap between the rich and the poor is widening. Some residents are unable to obtain stable income to afford proper housing, adequate transportation, health care, education, and many of them are struggling for food and shelter.

28 The Glasgow Story, “Modern Times: 1950s to The Present Day,” accessed Feb 5, 2021, <https://www.theglasgowstory.com/story/?id=TGSF0>.

29 Statista, “Mexico: Rate of urbanization from 2009 to 2019” , accessed Feb 5, 2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/275432/urbanization-in-mexico/>.

30 PopulationStat, “Mexico City, Mexico Population” , accessed February 5, 2021, <https://populationstat.com/mexico/mexico-city>.

In addition to the widening income gap, the excessive urban population also brought about more disastrous consequences. As a result of excessive urbanization, a large number of unemployed residents resort to drug trafficking. Countless death cases were related to drug-associated crimes and even government officials are implicated with no exceptions. For many, the profits of drug trafficking were irresistible and for some, crime is the sole way out for a living. In addition to drug-associated crimes, other crimes such as theft and robbery are also common in Mexico City.

The urbanization of Mexico City serves as a lesson for other cities in the world. While focusing on urbanization, if adequate urban planning is not prioritized, it may eventually lead to negative consequences.

II.Social Barriers for Urban Outcasts

a)Racial and Cultural Segmentation

Nowadays, the diversity of urban residents is increasing. While the population of the ethnic-racial communities has been mounting, in cities, communities with different cultural backgrounds are usually segregated with clear divisions, which will give rise to hostility among different cultural groups.

Such a situation may get worse when discriminative policies are introduced by the government. In Chicago, for example, after the implementation of biased public housing policies, most African Americans in the city are gathered into black communities, the proportion of black families in poverty rose from 0.200 in 1970 to 0.283 in 1980, while the proportion of deprived white families remained unchanged at about 0.060.³¹ Although the practices of segregation have long been abolished, the practices of identity politics in western societies are tearing the urban populations further apart, leading to abnormal urban development and diminishing the sustainability of urban development.

b)Biased Layout of Urban Planning

As it has mentioned in the previous part, a minor fault in urban planning can lead to irreversible damage to an area. Apart from the economic damage, a flawed urban layout will further intensify the division among communities. In most cases, the formation of slums and ghettos stems from biased urban planning and discriminatory zoning.

Contemporary urban planning often follows the Multiple Nuclei Model, which divides the city into different functional zones and a central business district.³² The model certainly well concentrates the resources of the city and accelerates the urban development in some parts of the city, but it sacrifices the interest of the marginalized groups. Most marginalized groups can only find shelters outside these function zones or in some deteriorating communities at the fringe of these centers, where they usually lack public facilities and social resources and are often neglected by the city planners.

31 Douglas S. Massey. "American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass." *American Journal of Sociology* 96, no. 2 (1990): 329-57.

32 Harris C.D, Ulman E., "The Natures of Cities" . *Annals of the American Academy of Political Science*,1945(242);7-17.

Besides, this urban layout model is often intertwined with other biased policies. In the early phase of city development in the US, the government adopted the redlining policy.³³ Although the redlining policy didn't divide the city into different function zones, it strictly drew the line between areas with promising futures and areas with a so-called deteriorating situation. The labels of these areas will directly influence the success rate of residents applying for mortgages.³⁴ Due to redlining policies and other discriminative policies, racial minorities only have access to a limited proportion of the city's housing market outside those "decent areas" (white areas), as many city organizers of the last century believe that integrated communities with the white and other racial minorities will undermine property value.³⁵ Today, the barriers between these communities are still deeply rooted inside the cities.

c) Identity Struggles of Marginalized Groups

Just like in any society, newcomers and other ethnic minorities of cities are often marginalized from mainstream society. Apart from the material damage mentioned in the previous parts, the harm of marginalization is also deeply rooted in the identity consciousness and struggles between these marginalized groups and the mainstream society.

From the marginalized groups' perspective, many of them are engaged in low-paid but essential manual work as cheap labor to construct the cities. For them, they firmly believe that they are important contributors to the development of the city. However, in the eyes of the indigenous people, these marginalized groups are the potential contenders for the share of social resources. The rising ethnocentrism and populism among some of the European cities that receives refugees prove that it is difficult for these marginalized groups to generate a sense of identity with their city under the strong conservative trend of thought.³⁶

Such a phenomenon can be explained from several perspectives. First, the marginalized groups lack the political power to change the status quo, as the political power is often in the hand of the mainstream of the city who attempts to block them from competing with original inhabitants. Second, as the local authorities has its door shut for the marginalized groups, the social media, has been the only outlet for the aggression of some marginalized people which will only further polarize the public opinion and cause severer segmentation between them and the mainstream society.

33 Rodney D. Green, Melvin L. Oliver, and Thomas M. Shapiro. 1995. "Black Wealth, White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality." *Journal of Negro Education* 64 (4): 477.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Claudia Postelnicescu. 2016. "Europe's New Identity: The Refugee Crisis and the Rise of Nationalism." *Europe's Journal of Psychology* 12 (2): 203–9.

III. Material Barriers for Urban Outcasts

a) Discriminative Economic System

In urban areas, deprivation in the economic system is another important source of inequality. Unequal income distribution is the epitome of the discriminative economic system.

In the US, black men were 28% less likely to be employed and gained 31% less annually from their occupation in 2010 than white men. As for women, black women also earn less than white women despite a smaller gap.³⁷ These phenomena of labor discrimination are even more common in high-paying posts. London, the international finance center where migration plays a significant role in its urban economy, has the highest income division among all other major cities.³⁸ As city size, skills, and the age structure of the population are the major drivers of both inequality and employment polarization, the concentration of financial vocations and other well-paid office works made the city favor the capable few and deprived the old, the marginalized minorities, and the youth with less education.³⁹ Moreover, workers from ethnic minority groups will face discrimination from their employers, coworkers, and customers, which can directly or indirectly affect their job performance and possibly lead to lower payment and even dismissal.⁴⁰ The racial disparities in the labor market create an income gap among races to a certain extent and make segregation possible.

b) Diminished Social Mobility

Following the uneven distribution of income, the stagnated social mobility is another problem. In the past decades, many governments have been promoting education. However, most of them focused on secondary and higher education, whereas primary education is left unchanged. On the positive side, it can attract cross-regional talents to study and eventually work in the city. On the negative side, the neglect of primary education is deepening the barriers between the haves and the have-nots, creating social exclusion that prevents the lower class from receiving higher education.

India is a typical example. Over the past decades, the Indian governments have been promoting higher education across the country. Although the literacy rate of India has increased from 12% at the time of Independence in 1947 to 75% in 2016, it still lags behind the world average literacy rate.⁴¹ Compared with the growth of higher education enrollment, the growth of primary and secondary education is much smaller.⁴² As the

³⁷ Kevin Lang and Ariella Kahn-Lang Spitzer. "Race Discrimination: An Economic Perspective." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 34, no. 2

³⁸ Neil Lee, Paul Sissons, and Katy Jones. 2016. "The Geography of Wage Inequality in British Cities." *Regional Studies* 50 (10): 1714–27.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Marie-Anne Valfort. 2018. "Do Anti-Discrimination Policies Work?" *The IZA World of Labor*, 450.

⁴¹ "Literacy Rate in India", Indian Guide, accessed Feb 21, 2021, <https://www.indiaonlinepages.com/population/literacy-rate-in-india.html>

⁴² Geeta Gandhi Kingdon. 2007. "The Progress of School Education in India." *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 23 (2): 168–95.

Business Process Outsourcing(BPO) and Knowledge Process Outsourcing(KPO) of India have made a vital contribution to the urban economy, the local government, like New Delhi, the budget share of higher education is continuously rising, squeezing the fundamental education which is much more important to the lower class people.⁴³ Excluding the influence of the caste system, the unbalanced urban education development can still greatly hinder social mobility.

c)Short of Necessary Public Services

Education is not the only sector that faces exclusion. Daily necessities like water and electricity are not guaranteed in run-down residential areas in cities due to the decayed transmission network. Underqualified domestic water in urban slums remains a chronic problem. For instance, in the Langas slum of Nairobi, domestic water is contaminated with fecal matter and is far from meeting the World Health Organization's guidelines for drinking water.⁴⁴ Basic purification of water including chemical disinfection using chlorine, alum or other common purifiers should also be provided to deprived neighborhoods.⁴⁵ Also, fire prevention measures in urban slums are particularly worrisome because of the housing sprawl and the large amounts of illegal constructions.

From the perspective of public transportation, people living in suburban areas find it hard to access cheap and convenient public transportation, as public transport systems seldom extend into those areas. Thus, marginalized groups need to pay more for their cost of commuting on their own, which makes their life even worse.

From the perspective of medical resources, it is one of the most polarized areas where the top 1% in the society have access to most of the medical resources.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, the have-nots are almost excluded from the medical service system, suffering from deteriorating health due to unaffordable pharmacy, expansive medical treatment, inaccessible healthcare, and unhealthy living environment.

43 Deepti Gupta, and Navneet Gupta. 2012. "Higher Education in India: Structure, Statistics and Challenges." *Journal of Education and Practice* 3 (2): 17–24.

44 Elizabeth Wambui Kimani-Murage, and Augustine M. Ngindu. 2007. "Quality of Water the Slum Dwellers Use: The Case of a Kenyan Slum." *Journal of Urban Health-Bulletin of The New York Academy of Medicine* 84 (6): 829–38.

45 Ibid.

46 Elizabeth Wambui Kimani-Murage, and Augustine M. Ngindu. 2007. "Quality of Water the Slum Dwellers Use: The Case of a Kenyan Slum." *Journal of Urban Health-Bulletin of The New York Academy of Medicine* 84 (6): 829–38.

d)Case Study: Urban Exclusion amid COVID-19

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the globe, arousing concerns over world economic development and urbanization. According to the World Cities Report 2020, an estimated 71 million urban residents will be pushed back into extreme poverty due to the pandemic.⁴⁷ Apart from that, about 1.6 billion informal workers, which are about half of the world's total workforce, have undergone a considerable decline in their salary.⁴⁸

In Sao Paulo, Brazil's largest and most prosperous city, the health care system with a relatively solid foundation has failed to protect its residents and to reduce mortality caused by the virus effectively. After the pandemic outbreak, the slum areas inside Sao Paulo, where the highest infection rate around the world, are insulated from the other areas of the city.⁴⁹ It was estimated that in the country's urban slums, the virus is claiming at least a thousand death per day at peak.⁵⁰

An undeniable reason for such a high number of deaths is that the underprivileged residents cannot afford the medical treatments. Aside from that, they also face difficulty in cooperating with epidemic prevention regulations. Even in this risky period, they still rely on payment rather than deposits to maintain survival. Those people in slums faced the double threats of starvation and infection, completely defenseless against the ferocious disease.

The underprivileged city residents in other more advanced countries are also suffering as the epidemic continues to ravage their nationhood. In Germany, the price of residential property rose by 6.8% compared with the data from the first quarter of 2019.⁵¹ More importantly, the average rent in urban areas has also surged during this pandemic.⁵² The high rent and housing prices have forced many families, especially those who have lost their jobs during the pandemic, out of their only shelters.

47 UNHABITAT, "World Cities Report 2020: The Value of Sustainable Urbanization," page 15, accessed Jan 20, 2021, <https://unhabitat.org/World%20Cities%20Report%202020>.

48 Ibid.

49 Stuart Ramsay, "Coronavirus: Inside Brazil's slums where COVID-19 is at risk of spreading like wildfire", Sky News, accessed Feb 3. 2021. <https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-inside-brazils-slums-where-covid-19-is-at-risk-of-spreading-like-wildfire-11995283>.

50 Ibid.

51 Statistisches Bundesamt, "Prices of residential property in the 1st quarter of 2020: +6.8% year on year", 2020, accessed Jan 25, 2021, https://www.destatis.de/EN/Press/2020/06/PE20_232_61262.html.

52 Ibid.

Possible Solutions

I. Plan for Resilient Urban Development

a) Adequate Urban Spatial Management

Urban spatial management can be divided into adequate expansion and proper internal management. For both of the two aspects, preplanning is crucial. To plan ahead, many cities adopt the idea of urban reserves by planting round-city green belts in order to prevent urban sprawl.

For adequate expansion, the most popular solution is decentralization which is an excellent method to tackle urban syndromes. By transferring the overloaded downtown population to the newly constructed satellite cities on the urban outskirts, urban planners can break away with the old city area's restrictions and better structure the layout of the new city to suit the needs of the whole conurbation. However, problems of coordinating the development between the satellite cities and the core cities will also emerge, which will be the focus of Topic B.

Renovating old public facilities and providing better public services to dwellers of old city areas are two parallel means of internal spatial management. For example, Hungary has planned to invest around 5.6 billion euros in upgrading the railway system in and around the old city area of Budapest in the next 20 years.⁵³ The budget will mainly cover the spending of the upgrading of existing rail lines and purchasing of new railway carriages. Similar actions should also be taken not only in infrastructure construction but also in many other areas of public services.

b) Enhancing Infrastructure Construction and Preservation

In urban development, the importance of infrastructure is non-negligible. How to attract more investment for infrastructure construction and preservation is key to addressing urban inequalities.

Apart from governments, private sectors may also contribute to infrastructure construction. For example, as one of the most advanced cities in the world, London's self-investment is remarkably low, for it relies more on funding from the central government than on its fiscal and political autonomy.⁵⁴ 74% of Greater London Authority and borough expenditure comes from intergovernmental transfers, compared to equivalent figures of 31% in New York and 18% in Paris.⁵⁵ In recent years, the government has welcomed more public investors and bidders so as to initiate more construction projects at the same time.

Infrastructure construction is important, but not the whole story. Preservation is also important. Facility preservation may include maintenance and management of municipal facilities, improvement of facilities efficiency, and other urban public drainage and public lighting facilities. From this aspect, the voice of the people must not be unheard of. The feedbacks delivered by city residents point out the direction for future upgrade and melioration, thus save time and finance for the city government.

⁵³ Daily News Hungary, "Hungary to invest EUR 5.6 bn in railway upgrades around Budapest in 20 years", Published on February 04, 2021, <https://dailynewshungary.com/hungary-to-invest-eur-5-6-bn-in-railway-upgrades-around-budapest-in-20-years/>.

⁵⁴ London First, "London's Infrastructure: Investing for Growth", May, 2018, https://www.londonfirst.co.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2018-05/Londons_Infrastructure_Investing_for_Growth.pdf.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Aside from absorbing public opinions, Governments should also conduct regular inspections on the condition of public facilities. Information received from such inspections can keep the government informed of the operation of infrastructure as comprehensively as possible so that early-stage problems can be detected and handled in time to avoid potential economic and social losses caused by negligence.

c)Utilizing Information Technology in Governance and City Planning

Information technology is providing new possibilities for governance and urban planning. The use of satellite systems and Geographic Information System (GIS) can better improve the accuracy of urban planning compared with traditional methods. Meanwhile, it also enables people to monitor an area continuously and portray different variants of digital information in more objective ways.⁵⁶

The widespread use of the internet and the full coverage of personal digital devices have narrowed down the distance between the government and the people and broadened the channels of information collection, and improved the comprehensiveness, accuracy, and effectiveness of information collected. In such a way, the government can make a quicker response to the problems residents care about most.

In modern cities, big data technology plays an important role as it provides abundant data resources for urban planning. At the same time, big data technology meets the requirements brings urban planners to a new level, and the construction of smart cities is also put on the agenda.

d)Case Study: Mumbai, Listening to its People

As mentioned before, public engagement in the maintenance of public facilities is crucial. Mumbai, one of the largest metropolitan cities in the world and the fast-growing economic capital in India, has done a relatively better job.

Residents in Mumbai are generally satisfied with their public transport system, with 54% feeling positive about the conveniences and 42% satisfied with the punctuality.⁵⁷ In order to improve the situation, the city authorities collected opinions from residents through modern technology and took corresponding actions. Many residents contacted the authority via social media (60%) and mobile channels (61%) and contributed to city planning by engaging in the process of infrastructure preservation and upgrading.⁵⁸ Absorbing public opinions can help decision-makers make better use of existing resources to improve people's livelihood. And the use of social media greatly improves the efficiency of the government's collection and analysis of public opinion so that the prime concerns from the residents can always be prioritized.

⁵⁶ Frank Stafford, "GIS in Urban Planning," Nov 7, 2014, <https://www.gislounge.com/gis-urban-planning/>.

⁵⁷ The Future of Infrastructure, "Mumbai", accessed Jan 30, 2021, <https://infrastructure.aecom.com/2019/mumbai>.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

The outcome of this project is very satisfying to the people of Mumbai, as they feel more attached to the governance of the city and have more faith in their city's authorities. The modern communication tools brought about huge positive changes to the city and can be borrowed by other cities worldwide.

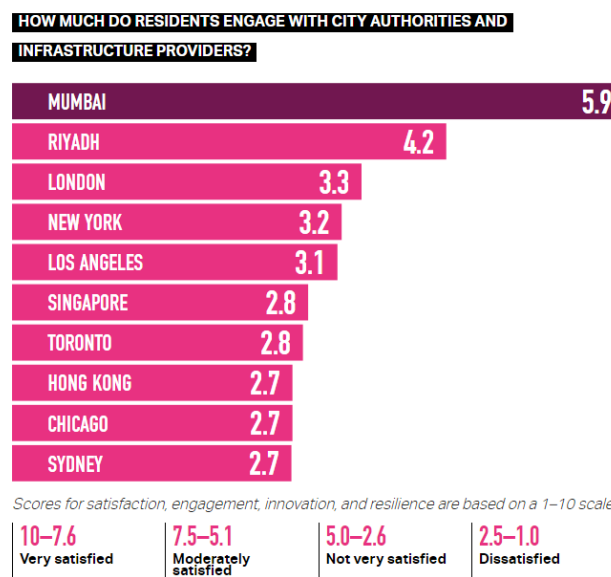


Figure 2 Public Engagement with City Authority and Infrastructure Provider⁵⁹

Although Mumbai has devoted considerable efforts to building a resilient and modern metropolitan city, there is still a long way to go in terms of electricity and water supply and environmental protection. The future of Mumbai lies in resilient and environmentally friendly development, under the assistance of modern technology, just like other cities around the world.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

II. Bring Inclusive Prosperity and Opportunities for Residents

a) Remove Systematic Barriers Imposed on Marginalized Groups

The most direct way for the local authorities to tackle systematic barriers is self-correcting unsound policies through the legislature in order to eradicate unfair institutional treatment. Immediate repeal of discriminatory policies may compensate the marginalized and pave the way for a fair social system. Enhancing law enforcement for the protection of the interests of the deprived groups provides them with security and substantive equality.

It is also necessary to push for legal innovation in order to weaken interpersonal discrimination. The effective way to solve this issue is to implement punitive policies to constrain people like employers and agents from judging minorities based on their prejudices. In Executive Order 11246, enacted by the US in 1965, the Secretary of Labor requires the US corporations which hold the federal contract to ensure that the employees and applicants for employment are fairly treated without discrimination against ethnicity, disability, religion, sex, or national origin. Otherwise, the federal government could terminate the contract or even never work with the company again.⁶⁰

Other than straightforward punishment, there are complementary strategies to tackle marginalization. More budgets could be spent on social welfare for the minority. In the Scandinavian countries, Sweden to be specific, the local government provides mass social welfare to ease the difficulties of childrearing for mothers and try to increase father's share of parental leave, which aids the females with more time and energy to compete with men in the workplaces.⁶¹ Reinforcing the marginalized groups can give them the opportunities to adjust their circumstances.

b) Preserve Cultural Diversity within Cities

Preserving cultural diversity within cities calls for the comprehensive effort of society to embrace differences.

The building of public facilities relevant to minority cultures can be a great way to preserve cultural diversity. Constructing libraries with the literature of the minority culture and museums with antiques embedded with the values of the minorities in urban public space can be the token of inclusiveness which represents urban recognition of minority cultures. Besides, public events like Diversity Weeks and celebrations of festivals important to particular cultures can be held to serve as bridges that connect different communities.

⁶⁰ “Executive Order 11246 – Equal Employment Opportunity” , US Department of Labor, accessed Jan 29, 2021, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ofccp/executive-order-11246/ca-11246>.

⁶¹ Marie-Anne Valfort. 2018. “Do Anti-Discrimination Policies Work?” The IZA World of Labor, 450–450.

Education is another powerful instrument of understanding each other. For example, Finland and other Scandinavian countries have included the cultural heritage of their local minorities into the curriculum of primary schools.⁶² Urban cultures can be illustrated and accurately narrated on school materials and intriguing school activities can be arranged in the school curriculum. By these means, urban cultural diversity can be sustained over the long haul.

c) Involvement of Citizens in Policymaking

The citizens hold the rights, not the accountability, to get involved in a limited political process. Thus, local authorities must encourage citizens to exercise their rights by offering their suggestions and opening more access for citizens to comment on existing policies directly.

There are two ways to increase public political participation. One way is response-oriented. The local authority just collects opinions of citizens and reflect their demands and expectation on the policies, indirectly getting citizens involved in policymaking. By carrying out polls, questionnaires, and surveys on specific issues either online or offline, the government can improve its governance on the basis of the suggestion of the citizens. This way features convenience and efficiency. The other way is proactive. The local authority can directly invite experts among citizens and representatives of civil organizations or unions to cooperate with the policymakers. Their empirical knowledge of the city's government and professional ideas about a certain field can help policymakers scientifically address urban problems. The government can even set up a new department to serve as the agency between policymakers and groups or communities which are desperate to offering advice and facilitate cooperation between the two sides. Also, live public debates or forums held by the government and broadcasted on governmental websites are new means to get people to offer their insight and suggestion. This way features professional and well-targeted.

⁶² Sirpa Kokko and Anna Kyritsi. 2012. "Cultural Heritage Education for Intercultural Communication." In *International Journal of Heritage in the Digital Era*, 1:165–68.

d)Case Study: Toronto's address of the housing issues of marginalized groups

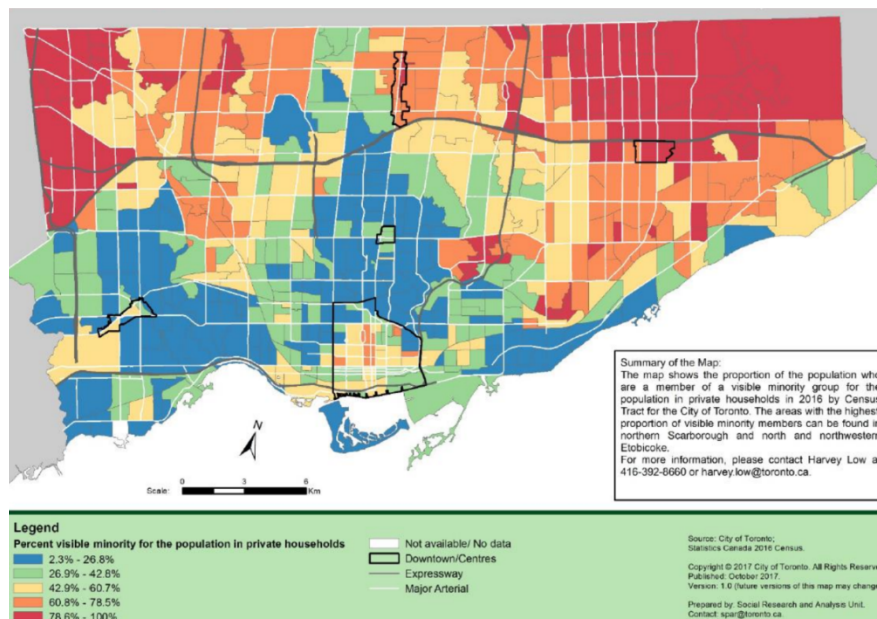


Figure 3 Proportion of Population who are Members of a Visible Minority Group, Toronto, 2016⁶³

In the city of Toronto, the residential units increased by 180,000 from 2008 to 2018, and facing that nearly 90 percent of renter households struggling for dwelling with an annual income lower than \$30,000 spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.⁶⁴ The housing affordability problems mainly concentrate on low-income households the unaffordability of housing in Toronto becomes more and more challenging to the local authorities. In response to the challenge, the city of Toronto decided to pilot initiatives to supply more affordable housings to the marginalized groups. One of the initiatives is financed by Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), the largest social housing provider in Canada. They redeveloped neighborhoods with public housing, which low-income citizens live in. For instance, Regent Park, a neighborhood in Toronto's downtown area with a long history of concentrated poverty since the 1950s, has been redeveloped. With the time span of 20 years of the renovation project, the neighborhood will be refreshed and includes 1800 public housing units, 5400 market units, and 200 affordable housing units.⁶⁵ The scale of the new Regent Park will boast its environment and infrastructure even compared to the thriving communities in Toronto. Thus, the marginalized groups are reinforced by this grand project and have more opportunities to develop public space in their communities. The United Nations has already acknowledged this remarkable revitalization initiative of marginalized neighborhoods.

⁶³ Toronto, "City of Toronto: The Changing Landscape of Toronto's Population", Toronto, accessed Jan 29, 2021, <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/data-research-maps/neighbourhoods-communities/toronto-social-atlas/2016-maps/>

⁶⁴ Shauna Brail and Tara Vinodrai. "The Elusive, Inclusive City: Toronto at a Crossroads." In Critical Dialogues of Urban Governance, Development and Activism: London and Toronto, edited by Bunce Susannah, Livingstone Nicola, March Loren, Moore Susan, and Walks Alan, 38-53.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

III.Unleash Social Economic Potentials of Urban Areas

By urbanizing with comprehensive plans and including more residents into the process, urban areas can uncover their potential for social and economic progress. Taking a microscopic view, every individual of the city residents can be a great contributor to urban development. By eliminating the social barriers between people, different communities can be better integrated with each other. Further, by planning urban areas with a holistic view, city governance will be significantly facilitated. Productivity will thus be promoted.

However, the contemporary industry has grown greatly in complexity. If the people wish to unleash urban areas' social, economic potential, a macroscopic view must be adopted. Nowadays, cities in one complex urban area often have different industrial divisions, making the city area functionally integrated. However, in some urban areas, this interdependence can be toxic as the more developed region takes up the majority of the benefit, while the surrounding cities have to bear the cost of development. In topic B, instead of clinging to the inequalities between people within individual cities, delegates will address the inequalities between core cities and secondary cities to achieve a better-coordinated development within a conurbation.

Topic B: Sustainable and Inclusive Development for Conurbation

Current Situation

I. Overview of the Current Situation

As the process of urbanization continues, cities have grown in size. In some urban areas, the city boundaries have overlapped with each other and thus formed a conurbation. In other cases, the construction of satellite cities may also lead to the formation of a conurbation.

Different cities in one conurbation can have different industrial divisions and shoulder different societal responsibilities. However, the distribution of cost and benefit, as well as the responsibility, can be unbalanced as a result of lacking coordination. As the core city has absolute dominance in both economic sense and political sense, secondary cities around the core city will surely become powerhouses of the development of the core city, fueling resources and labors into the core city. Nonetheless, the merit of development of the core cities is hardly shared with its secondary cities which shoulder most of the environmental costs of development.

Similar problems also occur in the case of satellite cities, even though they are usually carefully planned to suit the need of the conurbation. Some satellite cities turn into ghost towns, as what happened in Morocco, since the population continues to flood into major cities of the conurbation.⁶⁶ The imbalance between core cities and satellite cities still prevails in most conurbations.

In this part, the key subject is to untie the complicated relations between core cities and the surrounding secondary cities. As division continues to thrive within a conurbation, a coordinative solution is long overdue.

⁶⁶ Max Rousseau & Tarik Harroud, “Satellite cities turned to ghost towns? On the contradictions of Morocco’s spatial policy”, *International Planning Studies* (2019), 24:3-4, 341-352, DOI: 10.1080/13563475.2019.1665500.

II. Past Efforts

In the past decades, progress has already been made in this domain. However, the complexity of solving the problem multiplies as the forms of government vary in different conurbations.

In some conurbations, there is only one municipal government organizing the whole urban area of the core city and surrounding secondary cities (also known as the gigantic government). If that is the case, the solutions are much simpler; a well-rounded urban development plan will be enough. For example, in Shenzhen, China, the world's youngest megacity, largely unplanned development in chaotic fashion has taken place across the northern edge of the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in the initial years of its development.⁶⁷ However, those places were not under the authority of the municipal government of Shenzhen. After extending Shenzhen's municipal area in 2004 and the SEZ area in 2010, the city government started to implement policies to coordinate these satellite cities.⁶⁸ In order to limit the urban sprawl, the city combined the four counties at the northern border and established an "ecological protection zone."⁶⁹ Nevertheless, some satellite cities without municipal autonomy are positioned simply as resource providers and waste dumps. And in those cases, the bullying of the core city will only bring deterioration to the surrounding cities.

However, in a considerable proportion of conurbations, the authorities of the secondary cities and core cities are often completely separated from each other (also known as the polycentric government). In this regard, Colombia has established the Colombian Association of Metropolitan Areas, which serves as a bridge between cities and external cooperators.⁷⁰ The association has performed well in the fields of communication and negotiation, but failed in uniting cities to come up with practical policies. The association mainly issued some suggestions, but these suggestions were rarely implemented because they lack of coercive power. In order to solve the above problems, in 2016, UN-Habitat Colombia Office has been working with the Colombian Association of Metropolitan Areas in depth on topics such as institutional strengthening, metropolitan legislation and planning, and exchange of best practices.

That leads to the diligent work of UN-Habitat in this domain. Previously, UN-Habitat has established the MetroHUB initiative for supporting the sustainable development of complex city areas, by designing innovative metropolitan solutions to local situations and informing metropolises' decision-making processes with latest research.⁷¹ To be

⁶⁷ Linda Vlassenrood, "Chinese Urbanization Through the Lens of Guangming New Town." In *Shenzhen, from Factory of the World to World City*, edited by Linda Vlassenrood, 28–43. (Rotterdam: nai010 Publishers)

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ UN-Habitat, "UN-Habitat's work on sustainable metropolitan development will be strengthened in Colombia", accessed Jan 17, 2021, <https://unhabitat.org/un-habitat-s-work-on-sustainable-metropolitan-development-will-be-strengthened-in-colombia>.

⁷¹ UN-Habitat, "Metropolitan Management", accessed Jan 17, 2021, <https://unhabitat.org/topic/regional-and-metropolitan-planning>.

more specific, as a result of rapid urbanization, Uganda was facing a serious challenge planning its urban areas. Therefore, by April, 2017, international and Ugandan experts have gathered in the input sessions of MetroHUB in Berlin to discuss on various issues in order to introduce international and national approaches for planning, governance, finance and socio-environmental projects.⁷²

⁷² UN-Habitat, “Promoting socially inclusive, integrated cities through capacity development of Ugandan government authorities” , accessed Feb 21, 2021, <https://unhabitat.org/promoting-socially-inclusive-integrated-cities-through-capacity-development-of-ugandan-government-authorities>.

Problems to be solved

I.Economic Interdependence

a)Unsustainable Development Model

The unsustainable development model of conurbation can be understood as the unhealthy relationship between a core city and its secondary cities, and the unhealthy relationship mainly reflects on the fixed functions of these two kinds of cities.

Comparatively speaking, a core city takes advantages in terms of the size of the market and its convenient outward-looking transportation facilities. As a result, most centric industries which require these characteristics tend to gather in the core cities, for example, the market-oriented industries. On the contrary, secondary cities often suffer from the overexploitation of resources, serious damage to the environment, and failure to achieve sustainable development because of the resource-oriented industries, where the core city would take full use of resources originated in the secondary cities.

More importantly, as is mentioned in the previous part, one of the ways to form a conurbation is to build satellite cities. In consequence, the conurbation, which is run by a single government of the core city, is very hard to achieve industry transfer because the core city is reluctant to transfer the centric industries with high fiscal revenue to the surrounding satellite cities for its own benefits. If industry transfer is achieved, it may eventually lead to direct business conflicts between the core city and the satellite cities, and this is what the core city tries to avoid. Apart from that, there is another reason why core city is not willing to achieve industry transfer. For the core city itself, it has relied on the provision of the satellite cities for such a long time. Thus, it would be severely hard for core city to develop independently.

b)Uneven Distribution of Cost and Benefit of Development

To realize regional development, cities within a conurbation should cooperate together to share the cost and benefits of development equally. However, according to the well-known "U theory" proposed by Jeffery. G Williamson, "rising regional income disparities and increasing North-South dualism" within a conurbation are inevitable for early development stages, while "regional convergence and a disappearance of severe North-South problems" are typical for more mature stages of national growth and development.⁷³ Sadly, based on the current situation, most conurbations are still in the early development stages.⁷⁴

⁷³ Jeffery. G Williamson, "Regional Inequality and the Process of National Development: A Description of Patterns," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 13(1965), 3-47.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

The current situation is that the core cities are unwilling to transfer their core industries to secondary cities because they can obtain huge benefits from existing industries, and secondary cities can only continue to play the role of resource providers. Therefore, though some secondary cities have made great contributions to regional development, the biggest ultimate beneficiary is still the core city.

Unequal National Funding is another cause of the uneven distribution of the cost and benefits of development. The surveys about the flow of development funding in the US would be a perfect example. The surveys showed that there are clear winners and losers in the competition of applying for federal funds, with core cities drawing way more capital than others.⁷⁵ Depending on the funding category, the typical large county receives 1.25 to 4 times what the typical small county receives, way above their actual needs.⁷⁶ Further, when applying for state funding for similar projects, large counties' approval rate is relatively high because it seems to be more profitable in core cities rather than secondary cities and it is relatively difficult for small counties to obtain state financial assistance. The traditional mindset of the policymakers is slowing down the pace of development of the secondary cities. The survey also presented that the result can be seen on both macro and micro levels. Within the same conurbation, large counties can receive disproportionately more funding than small counties, and the number of difficulties a county is facing does not directly link with the proportion of national funding the said county is receiving.

c)Case Study: the Yangtze River Economic Belt

As it may be difficult to understand the internal industrial division of the conurbation, a case study of the Yangtze River economic belt may serve as a great magnified analogy of what is happening inside a conurbation. In this case, the economic belt can be perceived as the conurbation, with its eastern regions as the core cities, while middle and western regions as secondary cities.

The Yangtze River economic belt, which spans three major regions in China, has unique advantages and great development potential. It contains 11 provinces and cities, covering an area of about 2.05 million square kilometers, with a population and GDP of more than 40% of the country by the end of the 20th century.⁷⁷

Similar to conurbation, there are substantial economic gaps within the Yangtze River economic belt, and the gap is still widening. According to the level of economic development and geographical location, the Yangtze River economic belt is divided into three regions: east, middle and west. Shanghai, Zhejiang, and Jiangsu are the eastern regions; Anhui, Jiangxi, Hubei, and Hunan are the middle regions; Chongqing and Sichuan

⁷⁵ Brett Theodos and Eric Hangen, "Tracking the Unequal Distribution of Community Development Funding in the US", *Urban Institute*, Jan 31, 2019, Jan 19, 2021 Accessed, <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/tracking-unequal-distribution-community-development-funding-us>.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Liu Wei, Regional economic disparity of Yangtze economic zone", *Resources and Environment in the Yangtze Basin*, 2006(02):131-135.

are the western regions.⁷⁸ The gap between the economic development of the middle and western regions is rather small, but there is a huge gap between the eastern region and the rest two regions. As the economic growth rate of the eastern region is obviously faster than that of the other two regions, the gap is likely to continue to widen.⁷⁹

The imbalance of economic development in each region is closely related to the imbalance of industrial structure. From the proportion of different industrial employment ratios, the agricultural employment population in the middle and western provinces is much higher than that in the secondary and tertiary industries.⁸⁰ The situation is quite the reverse in the eastern part, among which Shanghai has already entered the period of industrialization, and the number of employment in the secondary and tertiary industries has exceeded that in the primary industry.⁸¹ In terms of utilizing foreign capital, the three provinces in the eastern region account for 22% of the whole country, while the middle and western regions account for 6.5%.⁸²

In general, although there is no such clear division of labor within conurbation as the economic belt, their division of the industrial chain is relatively the same. Just as the eastern regions firmly occupy the tertiary industry, the core cities of conurbations are also reluctant to transfer their cost-effective industries to the secondary cities. However, if this situation continues to deteriorate, it will be difficult to optimize the industrial structure and achieve sustainable development in both the conurbation and the economic belt.

II. Physical Separation

a) Lack of Urban Transport

In the process of rapid urban expansion, most public transportation systems of megacities have experienced great changes, which include dramatic growth of trip distance and motorized travel in particular.⁸³ These changes have brought further challenges to the development of urban transport.

To start with, in order to develop urban transport, the most challenging fact is that the biggest pursuit for most local authorities is efficiency and the cost and effect ratio rather than fairness for all communities. As a result, instead of trying to ensure the urban transport coverage of the whole area, many governments would choose to develop the local traffic system in pursuit of the most benefits to them.⁸⁴

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid.

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.

83 Ralph Gakenheimer, "Urban mobility in the developing world", *Transportation Research A*, Volume 33(1999): 671–689.

84 Ibid.

In this case, in many countries, the railway system and other inter-city transport systems often ignore the surrounding secondary cities while establishing more than one station in the core cities.⁸⁵ Moreover, the construction level of the urban internal transportation system is also inconsistent between core cities and secondary cities. Subway, bus, and other public transport are universal in most of the core cities, but for most of the secondary cities, the subway penetration rate is extremely low, and sometimes it is not easy to find direct bus lines.

This situation appears to be universal, except for China, as China has successfully adopted macro-control and strict poverty alleviation policies.⁸⁶ However, in turn, China has to spend much more money in maintaining these facilities, as many of its transportation systems are operating at a loss. To conclude, in most cases, the secondary cities can only communicate with the outside through the core cities. However, their only bridge is often blocked due to the negligence of the core cities, leaving the secondary cities detached from the rest of the world.

b)Lack of Necessary Talent Flow

Since the world has entered into an era of innovation and creativity, the factor of talents greatly influences the competitiveness of today's cities.⁸⁷ Unfortunately, due to the differences of attractiveness between core cities and secondary cities, talents tend to be heavily concentrated in core cities in most occasions. Core cities are saturated with talents and fierce competitions while secondary cities are in great need of personnel to develop urban areas. Therefore, many conurbations lack necessary and proper talent flow.

For talents, core cities have broader development prospects and seemingly higher social mobility. Core cities not only possess more job opportunities but also retain more detailed job classifications, so it is easier for talents to grasp the opportunities in core cities to realize self-improvement and to climb up the social ladder.

Compared with the secondary cities, core cities also have better infrastructures, better living conditions, and a more inclusive social environment. Taking education into account, core cities provide students with a high-quality and perfect education system.⁸⁸ However, as is mentioned in the previous part, people come to the core cities and are lost in the core cities. Where there are opportunities, there are competitions. Furthermore, the more opportunities there are, the heavier competitions there will be. In fact, there is a surplus of talents in most core cities, as most of them cannot really catch up with the intense competition within the core cities.

Nonetheless, due to the reasons mentioned above, secondary cities have a low attraction for talents, while these places are in grave need of high-quality personnel. Talents are continuously pouring into the core cities, even though they are highly devalued due to the competitions' intensity in those core cities.

⁸⁵ Wang Jiaoe, Jiao Jingjuan, "Spatial effects of high-speed rails on interurban economic linkages in China", *Acta Geographica Sinica*, 2014, 69(12):1833-1846.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Chen Xinxiang, "Tolerance and Economic Performance in American Metropolitan Areas: An Empirical Investigation." *Sociological Forum* 26, no. 1 (2011): 71-97.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

c)Lack of Coordinated Regional Governance

In order to effectively deal with regional public issues, it is necessary to establish a coordinated regional governance system. However, currently, due to the numerous political entities and complex interest groups within the conurbations, there are many contradictions between different stakeholders, and many regional problems cannot be effectively managed.⁸⁹ As is mentioned in the previous part, scholars have concluded the problems existing in regional governance of conurbation into two different types of government, which are respectively gigantic governance and polycentric governance.⁹⁰ In this part, existing problems will be discussed in accordance with the above classifications.

One of the problems of the gigantic governance is the concentration of administrative power in such conurbations where most of the decisions may have been made without secondary cities' involvement. In this case, secondary cities are easily forced to sacrifice some of their own interests, and core cities would always be the center of concern. Additionally, a gigantic government easily leads to oversupply and unnecessary production, as there are no competitions between different governments.⁹¹

However, the said competitions between local governments can also lead to a lack of coordination when dealing with regional issues, just like in the case of polycentric governance. In this case, secondary cities and core cities both have the right to formulate and implement their own policies within their jurisdiction. However, the inconsistent regulations would inevitably lead to negative impacts on residents' life. For example, the different requirements of road traffic regulations in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region have seriously affected the residents' convenience for commuting. Moreover, while emphasizing efficiency, polycentric governance ignores important social issues like equality and justice. In this case, both of the core cities and secondary cities tend to develop in isolation, so it is difficult for secondary cities to get the economic and technological support that conurbation should have provided.

⁸⁹ Ralph Gakenheimer, "Urban mobility in the developing world", *Transportation Research A*, Volume 33(1999): 671-689.

⁹⁰ Neil Brenner, "Decoding the Newest Metropolitan Regionalism in the USA: A Critical Overview", *Cities*, 2002, 19(1):3-21.

⁹¹ Ibid.

III. Other Social Issues

a) Dual-image of Housing Situation within Conurbation

In order to portray a more coherent picture of the dual-image of the housing situation within conurbation, it is necessary to introduce the mechanism of the spillover effect of housing price fluctuation.⁹²

In the initial state, the residents of secondary cities migrate to the core city to pursue higher quality and more convenient life. According to the law of supply and demand, housing prices in core cities will rise by leaps and bounds.⁹³ The consequence of this situation is that a large number of middle-income and low-income people cannot afford the housing price in the core city but still need to work there, so they choose to buy houses in the surrounding cities with a relatively low housing price. Eventually, the housing prices of the surrounding cities would also rise sharply because the demand is increased, and this is the mechanism of the spillover effect of housing price fluctuation that is mentioned before.

However, the spillover effect can only push the housing price of secondary cities to rise continuously but cannot bring improvement to the living condition of the houses in secondary cities. Because the most fundamental reason for the rise of housing prices in secondary cities is not the high quality of the living environment, but because of geographical advantages, so even if sometimes the housing prices in some areas of core cities are similar to those in satellite cities, the living conditions in secondary cities are far inferior to those in core cities. Therefore, the quality and value ratio of real estate in secondary cities is seriously out of balance, which is not conducive to healthy market competition.

Last but not least, it is worth mentioning that because of the different levels of urban economic development, this spillover effect is more likely to occur in areas with a large population.⁹⁴

92 Huang Yanfen, Zhang Zhikai, Tang Jingwei, “Spillover effect of housing price fluctuation in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei urban agglomeration——Analysis from the Perspective of Single Center Theory” , *Price: Theory & Practice*, 2018(11):30-33.

93 Ibid.

94 Sun Chao, Tang Yunfeng, “Urban house price fluctuation and industrial structure adjustment: empirical evidence from the spatial spillover horizon” , *Industrial Economics Research*, 2020(05):100-113.

b)Polarization of the Access to Social Services

Social services refer to welfare services in the fields of education, medical care, and so on.⁹⁵ During the Coronavirus pandemic, the polarization of the access to social services of conurbation can obviously reflect on the standard of medical care.

It is evident that morality indicates the level of medical treatment, and there are differences in mortality between core cities and surrounding cities. For example, major cities in Oklahoma see more total cases of COVID-19, but surrounding areas are seeing a higher death rate.⁹⁶ Recent research at Oklahoma State University reveals the widening gap between rural COVID-19 deaths and urban COVID-19 deaths.⁹⁷

Comparatively speaking, hospitals in the surrounding cities are feeling the surge more heavily than those in the core cities because facilities there are nowhere near enough. Thus, they are still struggling with capacity.⁹⁸ In some cases, residents in the satellite cities are finding that the nearest hospital with available beds is hours away.⁹⁹ When facing matters of life and death, the polarization of access to social services within conurbation is particularly vital and ripe for change.

Apart from that, the distribution of educational resources in conurbation is extremely uneven, mainly reflected in the disparity between different schools and their quality of teaching. In core cities, there are not only public schools but also private schools that can make students receive higher quality or more professional education. However, there may be only one public school within one district or even many districts in a secondary city. In terms of teaching quality, few teachers who have received higher education are willing to teach in secondary cities. Besides, the teaching facilities and the quality of students in core cities are also better.

⁹⁵ Rose-Ackerman, Susan, “Social Services and the Market” , *Columbia Law Review*, no. 6 (1983): 1405-1438.

⁹⁶ Peyton Yager , “Rural vs. Urban: Per capita mortality rate from COVID-19 continues to ravage rural Oklahoma” , *Oklahom's News*, Jan 27, 2021, Jan 27, 2021 Accessed, <https://kfor.com/news/coronavirus/rural-vs-urban-per-capita-mortality-rate-from-covid-19-continues-to-ravage-rural-oklahoma/>.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Lauren Leatherby, “The Worst Virus Outbreaks in the US Are Now in Rural Areas” , *The New York Times*, Oct 22, 2020, Jan 27, 2021 Accessed, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/10/22/us/covid-rural-us.html>.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

Possible Solutions

I. Towards Coordinated Governance

a) Establishing Policy Cooperation Mechanism

As it is mentioned in the previous part, gigantic governance and polycentric governance would lead to the problem of lacking coordinated regional governance. Since the mid-1990s, some scholars claim to have found a third governance path different from the traditional ones, which is “New Regionalism.”¹⁰⁰ In a way, the new regionalism might be the alternative approach for the coordinated management of a conurbation.

Unlike other forms of governance, the new regionalism focuses on the communication between different local governments and different government sectors. According to the theory, when designing policies, governments of the conurbation should not focus on its institutional structure but on establishing policy cooperation mechanisms between corresponding government sectors and private subjects in both the core cities and the secondary cities.¹⁰¹

To be more specific, the new regionalism appreciates the multilateral negotiation system and the concept of cooperative governance. It actively advocates the concept of inter-city integration and cooperation.¹⁰² For the conurbations with unified administration (or gigantic government), new regionalism creates a way for the secondary cities to negotiate with the core cities for their own benefits in an equal manner. For the conurbations formed by overlapped city boundaries (or governed by the polycentric government), new regionalism helps conurbations optimize their policies through a unified negotiation platform. New regionalism emphasizes more on the “guiding” role of the government in social and economic development, ecological protection, and alleviating social problems in the whole conurbation, rather than blindly controlling the way and speed of spatial growth of cities. In particular, by creating coordination and cooperation mechanisms of different forms and functions, various separations between core cities and secondary cities could be reduced, and in this way, the process of coordinated regionalization within the conurbation could be accelerated.

100 Wilfred J. Ethier, “The New Regionalism” , *The Economic Journal*, 108, no. 449 (1998): 1149-161.

101 H. V. Savitch, Ronald K. Vogel, “Introduction: Paths to New Regionalism” , *State & Local Government Review*, 32, no. 3 (2000): 158-68.

102 Stephanie Ohshita, “Cooperation Mechanisms: A Shift Toward Policy Development Cooperation” , *Cooperation Structure: The Growing Role of Independent Cooperation Networks*, (2006), 63-78.

b) Drive the Integration of Public Services

Building up a people-oriented society has already become one of the premises for social and economic development. Further, as the secondary city and the core cities are growing to be functionally integrated, people's need is also unneglectable. Therefore, it is necessary to drive the integration of public services in order to satisfy the local residents of conurbations.

Sustainable inter-city transport is one of the most important requirements for coordinated governance of conurbation. The concept of sustainable transportation includes at least four aspects: a high level of accessibility, environmental efficiency, a comprehensive public transportation system, and social equity.¹⁰³ In order to follow the above principles, first of all, though some secondary cities may lack the economic driving factors of developing all-round coverage of urban transport, the basic connection between the core city and the secondary city, which is based on the need of its people, should be set up. Apart from that, different functional areas in conurbation should be reasonably allocated. To be more specific, there should be no excessive concentration on a single functional area, and some functions of the core cities should be decentralized to secondary cities.¹⁰⁴ This can not only reduce the commuting time of residents, achieve sustainable development but also help promote the development of secondary cities.

Apart from the transportation system, e-government can be a great approach to push forward the integration of public services of different cities. Japan and Singapore have made outstanding achievements in the research and development of this area.¹⁰⁵ From their experiment, the construction of e-government can realize online information sharing between core cities and secondary cities. Further, for citizens, all government departments of the cities can be accessed on the same online platform, which provides services from collecting payments to identity registration. For different government sectors, having a unified data system in hand can save a considerable amount of time waiting for neighboring cities to provide the data they required.

As for the medical care of the conurbation, policymakers should also carefully examine the possibility to integrate the secondary cities with the core city, providing the residents in the secondary cities with the opportunities to receive better medical care as that in the core cities.¹⁰⁶

103 J. P. Nicolas, P. Pochet, & H. Poimboeuf, "Towards sustainable mobility indicators: application to the Lyons conurbation", *Transport Policy*, 10(2003), 197–208.

104 Pengjun Zhao, "Sustainable urban expansion and transportation in a growing megacity: Consequences of urban sprawl for mobility on the urban fringe of Beijing", *Habitat International*, 34 (2010) 236–243.

105 Sarah Hooper, "The Medical–Legal Partnership Model: Focus on Older Adults and Social Determinants of Health", *Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging*, 43, no. 4 (2019): 99–103.

106 Ibid.

c)Case Study: Xiong'an New Area—an Example of Coordinated Governance between Beijing and Hebei

Xiong'an New Area, which is a newly-built satellite city, can be seen as a result of cooperation between Beijing and the secondary cities around Beijing in Hebei Province. In this project. The core city provided capital and technological support, while the secondary cities provided land resources and human labor. After completion, Xiong'an New Area is expected to serve as an antidote to the urban maladies of Beijing, and most importantly, as a bridge connecting Beijing with its secondary cities.

Recently, the Beijing government has agreed to sign another strategic cooperation agreement with Hebei Province to promote the development of Xiong'an New Area jointly, and they have identified eight key areas of cooperation and a number of early support projects.¹⁰⁷ Beijing takes the lead in providing high-quality education and medical resources to support the construction of three schools and one hospital in Xiong'an New Area.¹⁰⁸ After completion, schools and hospitals in Beijing will provide corresponding educational and medical resources. At present, the construction of this project is progressing in an orderly manner.

At the same time, the intercity railway of Beijing and Xiong'an is an important artery connecting Beijing and Hebei Province.¹⁰⁹ The Beijing section has been put into operation in September 2019 and is expected to be fully operational by the end of 2021.¹¹⁰ Moreover, suburban railways have entered a stage of rapid development in Hubei Province. All the dead-end roads of national expressways in the region have been re-planned. The "one-hour-traffic-circle" around the capital has gradually expanded, and the half-hour trip from Beijing to Tianjin has made it more convenient for residents to travel.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Qi Jia, Yingxia Yun, "Measurement of urbanization development quality and analysis of regional disparities in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region", *Journal of Arid Land Resources and Environment*, 2015,29(03):8-12.

¹⁰⁹ Hui Liu, Yuming Shen, Dan Meng, Jin Xue, "The City Network Centrality and Spatial Structure in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Metropolitan Region", *Economic Geography*, 2013,33(08):37-45.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

II. Towards Sustainable Regional Industry

a) Promoting Pluralist Development of Secondary Cities

It is necessary to enhance the overall innovation ability of conurbation to realize pluralist development of the secondary cities. For instance, relying on the advanced information industries of San Francisco Bay area, financial industry, tourism, and other service industries there also developed at a very high speed. San Francisco Bay area has therefore become a world-class region with the highest per capita GDP in the world's major Bay areas.¹¹²

More importantly, the economic achievements of San Francisco Bay area not only depend on innovation but also rely on the reasonable division of labor and industries among cities. Each of the five major areas of San Francisco Bay area has its own economic characteristics. South Bay is famous for "Silicon Valley", where many innovative high-tech enterprises gather.¹¹³ With Auckland as the center and mechanical productions as the main industries, East Bay is the center of the transportation system in the western part of the US.¹¹⁴ Experiences could be drawn from San Francisco Bay. For secondary cities, the best way to develop is to find suitable industries and bring advantage into full play. But at the same time of development, the city should also keep in mind that it cannot rely too much on the original advantages of the region, but should pay more attention to attracting external investment, developing high cost-effective industries such as tourism, and achieving sustainable development.

Seeking out the advantages of the city itself and developing industries with the characteristics of the city can drive the pluralist development of secondary cities in conurbation so as to drive economic development.

b) Promoting Industrial Transfer from Core Cities

The industrial transfer is the spatial expression of the regional division of labor in economic development.¹¹⁵ With the progress of science and technology, and the development of economic globalization, the model of the regional division of labor has undergone profound changes, that is, from the traditional division of different kinds of industries to the division in accordance with different location factors.¹¹⁶ Every link of the product value chain should be allocated to the location that is most conducive to obtaining competitive advantages.

With the progress of science and technology, the boundary of different industries has

112 Brian J. Godfrey, "Urban Development and Redevelopment in San Francisco", *Geographical Review* 87, no. 3 (1997): 309-33.

113 Ibid.

114 Ibid.

115 Anthony Goerzen, Christian Geisler Asmussen, Bo Bernhard Nielsen, "Global Cities and Multinational Enterprise Location Strategy", *Journal of International Business Studies* 44, no. 5 (2013): 427-50.

116 Ibid.

become vague, and only very few secondary cities with special advantages (typically with abundant resources) can effectively undertake the industrial transfer of core cities.¹¹⁷ As the core city usually has complete supporting facilities and is relatively closer to the market, enterprises have less incentive to move to secondary cities, even though such industrial transfer is beneficial to both core cities and secondary cities in the long run.

In the conurbations with different municipal government, natural market operating mechanism, in this case, would fail secondary cities if people decide to do nothing. However, things will be different if policymakers of the conurbation start to interfere. To ensure the necessary industrial transfer, the government should provide favorable conditions for the development of enterprises in the secondary cities. The construction of industrial parks and the provision of regional development subsidies are very effective measures to attract industrial agglomeration in secondary cities.¹¹⁸

In addition, as for the conurbation with unified municipal government, the core city itself should optimize its industrial structure, voluntarily release some of its industries to the secondary cities. Only when industry upgrading is realized in secondary cities, can they reduce the environmental pollution caused by industrial production. In this way, the situation of congestion can also be declined, and the urban spatial layout could also become more reasonable.

c)Promoting Balanced Housing Situation

Conurbations should promote a more balanced housing situation by controlling the housing price in both the core cities and the secondary cities. It is also necessary to renovate the old and rundown communities in the conurbation.

For core cities, controlling the housing price is essential. For one thing, high housing prices will significantly reduce the attractiveness of the city for young graduates. For another, the soaring housing price of the core city will surely push the housing price of its secondary cities to climb up, which will significantly drive up the living expense of the secondary cities' citizens. Meanwhile, for secondary cities, the housing price should be constrained in a certain range according to its own level of development, instead of the housing situation of the core cities.

Apart from that, in core cities, the government should effectively activate the vitality of the housing rental market, improve the quality of old houses in core cities so as to increase housing supply and the circulation of existing houses. The government should also provide preferential support to highly educated residents, indemnification housing, and innovative industrial housing to solve the problem of separation of work and housing in core cities.

III.Towards Integrated Civic Society

¹¹⁷ Laurent Frésard, Ulrich Hege, Gordon Phillips, “Extending Industry Specialization through Cross-Border Acquisitions” , *The Review of Financial Studies* 30, no. 5 (2017): 1539-582.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

In order to promote the integration of civil society, it is necessary to increase cultural exchanges between cities to improve citizens' sense of identity of conurbation rather than the city.

Governments should focus on promoting the interconnection of residents between cities because it can help to lay a solid foundation of cultural exchange. For example, in the conurbation of Île-de-France, Seine—the natural grand canal, and the dense land transportation network have ensured the extensive exchange of residents between cities, and this is the reason why the residents of the conurbation have begun to carry out extensive and in-depth cultural exchanges since the 1830s.¹¹⁹ Therefore, the government should pay attention to developing denser and more convenient public transport to promote the interconnection of residents.

In addition, holding cultural exchange activities within conurbation is also a good way to promote the integration of civil social life, for example, the Dragon Boating Contests that are often held in the Pearl River Delta and the cultural heritage exchange activities held in Mombasa, Kenya.¹²⁰ These activities can help to promote the residents' cultural identity of the region. However, while promoting cultural identity, the government must also recognize that regional cultural diversity should be protected rather than reduced.

119 Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Île-de-France” , Encyclopaedia Britannic, Jan.26, 2021 Accessed, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ile-de-France-region-France>.

120 Evaristus Irandu and Parita Shah, “Development of Cultural Heritage Tourism in Kenya: A Strategy for Diversification of Tourism Products” , *Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage in Kenya: A Cross-Disciplinary Approach* (2016), 154-71.

Outlook for Conurbations

I. Conurbation as One Integrated Economic Engine

In terms of future conurbations, both the core city and the secondary cities within the region will unleash their greatest economic potential. A coordinated and unified conurbation can serve as an integrated economic engine to enlarge its proportion in the market.

To start with, the conurbation will effectively integrate internal and external resources to realize economic development in the future.¹²¹ On the one hand, in order to integrate internal resources, cities with an edge on specific resources would complement needed cities, extending the supply chain and the value chain. Apart from that, conurbation can provide the residents with a developed intercity transportation system, reducing commuting and transportation costs and leaving more fiscal funding so as to support private entities, like the enterprises.

On the other hand, the conurbation as a whole can also gain more benefits from the external market because a coordinated conurbation would obtain higher level of discourse power when trading with the external commercial entities. It is also possible that conurbations may extend their transaction scope to the international society. For example, nearly 30% of the annual trade volume between the U.S. and Canada is realized through the border between Detroit of Great Lakes and the Windsor city of Canada.¹²²

II. Conurbation as a Hub of Innovation

Due to the convenient transportation system between cities, the urban population's mobility will be greatly enhanced, which will also bring about the inflow of human resources. Talents and experienced workers will be absorbed and concentrated into advanced industries within the conurbation, which lays the foundation for further innovation. Further, the inter-regional connection can also bring about the exchange of market information and informal expertise knowledge.¹²³ As the bonds are enhanced through market practices, innovation will gradually be derived from communication and interaction between cities, while an innovation-friendly milieu will be developed.¹²⁴

121 Giles Duranton, and Diego Puga. 2003. "Micro-Foundations of Urban Agglomeration Economies." *National Bureau of Economic Research*.

122 Ibid.

123 Bjørn Terje Asheim, and Arne Isaksen. 1997. "Location, Agglomeration and Innovation: Towards Regional Innovation Systems in Norway?" *European Planning Studies* 5 (3): 299–330.

124 Bengt-Åke Lundvall. "National Systems of Innovation: Towards a Theory of Innovation and Interactive Learning." In *the Learning Economy and the Economics of Hope*, 85-106. (London; New York: Anthem Press,

From another perspective, conurbation can be a great breeding ground for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Further, based on the conurbation's large regional market, those SMEs are more likely to launch advanced innovative programs.¹²⁵ With more SMEs competing in the same region, enterprises need to create their special advantages to win over their competitors. For the individual SMEs, it is too risky for them to launch progressive innovative programs because sometimes these programs are not enough to sustain their survival and development. However, for the whole picture, the large regional market of the conurbation can reduce the potential loss of initiating an advanced innovative program.

III. Conurbation as a Token of Inclusiveness

By promoting the cooperation between the core city and the secondary cities, barriers and obstacles for societies and individuals of the region will be lifted, and equality and sustainability of all levels will be made possible.

As migration and population flow are becoming normal between cities within a conurbation, the barriers between the "newcomers" and the original residents will be lifted, and the openness of the city will maintain at a very high level. There will be more multi-cultural activities because people of different ethnicities can meet in communities, neighborhoods, and other public places within the conurbation. The public service sector will also adapt to the changing situation of the urban population and impose scientific policies toward the migrating minorities.

¹²⁵ Christopher Freeman, 1995, "The 'National System of Innovation' in Historical Perspective", In *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 19:5–24.

Country Positions

I.USA

The US has rich experience in light of developing modern cities. On the one hand, the US set an example in urban development and conurbation construction. On the other hand, the US still faces severe urban maladies that restrain their megacities development.

As the world's largest nation of immigrants, the US, just like most immigrant countries worldwide, has a controversial history of governance regarding the conflicts between mainstream and minority groups.

The US has come a long way in building metropolitan areas. The core city is effectively connected to its surrounding secondary prefectures by inter-city highways. The rise of secondary cities influences residence choice, which lessens the central urban areas' population burden. Industrial agglomeration follows urban agglomeration and facilitates the boost of productivity.

Apart from these similarities to the European countries, the US' metropolises feature their polycentric regional layout. For instance, all the conurbations in the Greater New York City Area have their well-directed functions. New York City is the metropolitan area's financial center, Washington DC, which serves as the political center. Boston plays as the education center. With secondary cities like Baltimore, not far from the nation's capital, they act as the mediator enhances inter-city links and interaction, making the conurbations well connected.

Polycentric conurbations also have drawbacks. Traffic congestion deteriorates between and within those conurbations. As the old core city has announced a series of old neighborhood renovation policies, it has encouraged the wealthy population to move back to the city from the suburban areas, leaving the secondary city, once again, empty. For example, the Chicago metropolitan area has become a place where gentrification and redevelopment are widespread.¹²⁶ After the advocates of neoliberal policies in Western society, the private sectors in the US rapidly took over various public services developed by the government, giving rise to a generalized decline of living standards and increased urban deprivation. With fiscal and social governance functions devolved outright to the regions, the states and local authorities take hold of more power, which intensifies municipal competition.¹²⁷ Thus, cooperation within the metropolitan areas could transfer into political struggles. The coordinated conurbation system would breach because all the local governors may strive to grasp the region's leadership to direct more favorable resources into their electoral district and ensure their re-election.

¹²⁶ Richard F. Dye, and Daniel P. McMillen. 2007. "Teardowns and Land Values in the Chicago Metropolitan Area." *Journal of Urban Economics* 61 (1): 45–63.

¹²⁷ Neil Brenner. 2002. "Decoding the Newest 'Metropolitan Regionalism' in the USA: A Critical Overview." *Cities* 19 (1): 3–21.

II.China

Being the largest developing country globally, China has revealed many problems shared with many other developing countries of today. Meanwhile, its success story of reducing poverty in urban and deprived areas provides useful references and is the role model for many smaller developing countries.

The most evident Chinese urbanization problem is the widening urban-rural disparity, especially when China's urban territory has expanded. Local governments or developers took over the rural land in the city's outskirts, forcing the suburban farmers out of their land and placing their employment opportunities at risk. As a result, many workers have migrated to the economically-developed cities to look for employment opportunities. Some fewer residents can stay in rural areas to focus on agricultural planting and surviving on low incomes from agriculture and plantations.¹²⁸ The industrial gap between urban and rural areas leads to a larger gap in education, medical care, and social security.¹²⁹

Many developing countries are dealing with similar issues that China is facing in the process of urbanization. Plenty of them has adopted the strategy of giving priority to industrial development. Some are implementing protection policies for industry, providing government subsidies, and depressing the price of agricultural raw materials, hoping to drive the development of agriculture and the whole economy through the development of the industry. Unfortunately, under these fiscal policies, the proportion of agricultural output value in developing country's GDP decreased rapidly, and the gap between urban and rural areas has widened.¹³⁰

Unlike most developing countries, China's measures are to use macro-control to form a modern agricultural, industrial system and realize the integration of primary, secondary, and tertiary industries in the rural areas. Also, China is committed to protecting the rural ecological environment and rural scenery, improving infrastructure and coordinating natural resources protection and construction. To make farmers more willing to stay in rural areas, the Chinese government has also introduced a particular medical insurance and social insurance system for rural residents, providing much welfare for rural life. In 2019, rural residents' per capita disposable income in China was 16,021 yuan, 6.2% higher than that in 2018. The per capita consumption expenditure of rural residents was 13,328 yuan, which increased 9.9% over 2018.¹³¹ The data above shows that macro policies have helped China's agriculture and rural areas maintain a healthy steady development status.

128 the State Council of the People 's Republic of China, "GDP" , the State Council of the People 's Republic of China, accessed Feb 3, 2021, <http://www.gov.cn/shuju/search.htm?q=GDP>.

129 Ibid.

130 Nan Zhang, "Dual Economic Structure Problems Analysis and Development Research" , *Journal of Inner Mongolia University of Finance and Economics*, 2014, 12(04), 26-28.

131 Bailong Zheng, Zhengbin Lin, "Agricultural Cooperation for Poverty Alleviation in the Western and Eastern Regions of China" , *Taiwan Agricultural Research*, 2019(06):28-33.

Moreover, in recent years, China has also introduced its successful experience to other developing countries. With the deepening of friendly cooperation between China and Africa, more and more Chinese enterprises are helping African countries build infrastructure. For instance, on Sept 5, 2019, during the African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) held in Accra, Ghana, Chinese e-commerce enterprises shared their poverty alleviation experiences by using the flower and tree industry in Muya, China, and reached a consensus in helping African countries on poverty alleviation in the digital economy.¹³² Chinese enterprises have brought their experience and technology to the African continent and promoted sustainable agricultural development to activate the coordinated development of urban and rural areas in African countries.

III. Malaysia

Malaysia has a relatively higher urbanization level among Southeast Asian countries. And it is also a typical example of urbanization in this region. In 2019, the urban residents accounted for 76.2 % of its total population.¹³³

Urbanization in Malaysia is partly affected by environmental factors. Like many other equatorial countries, hurricanes and floods have created considerable urban development obstacles. Many of its urban areas also face the threat of the rising sea levels of global warming like many other coastal cities in this region.

In the urbanization process, Malaysia faced multiple problems in residential, industrial, and commercial aspects due to rapid development, such as inadequate sewage disposal, traffic congestion, and poverty, which affect urban areas and exhaust rural migrants' resources.

Problems not only exist within cities but also between the nations' capitals and their secondary cities. In many Southeast Asian countries, many social resources and domestic populations are concentrated in capital cities due to its rapid urbanization process. However, the secondary cities, which become much closer due to the core city's expansion, are now the waste dump for the whole conurbation. In Malaysia, Kota Bharu and Kuala Lumpur each hold nearly 1.5 million residents as the two largest cities.¹³⁴ In the third-largest city, Klang, the population rapidly dropped to 0.8 million people.¹³⁵ Such a phenomenon commonly exists among other Southeast Asian countries. This may result in a negative consequence, as secondary cities become neglected in the process of urbanization and conurbation.

132 Donghe Li, "China's e-commerce poverty alleviation experience helps African rural construction", *cn.ifpri.org*, Sept.16, 2019, Feb.6, 2021 Accessed, <https://cn.ifpri.org/archives/5984>.

133 "Compendium of Environment Statistics, Malaysia 2019," Department of Statistics Malaysia Official Portal, accessed Feb 3, 2021, https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemByCat&cat=162&bul_id=QXp4UnZmekFnVGNINy9GemxBWWZTZz09&menu_id=NWVEZGhEVINMeitaMHnzK2htRU05dz09.

134 Worldometer, "Population Density, Malaysia," Worldometer, accessed Feb 7, 2021, <https://www.worldometers.info/demographics/malaysia-demographics/>.

135 Ibid.

As a result, preplanning and management of cities have become a top priority and a crucial task for policymakers in Southeast Asian countries to prevent them from falling into the vicious circle of unplanned urbanization. The problems of improper detailed planning, ecological damage, water floods, and air pollution are also highlighted.

IV. Greece

Athens, the capital of Greece, was one of the pioneering cities that set up urban transit systems during the second industrial revolution. A developed transportation system produces various benefits: speed, safety, and convenience. The metro and railway join the prefectures of Athens so well that domestic infrastructure investment and industrial projects swarm into the greater Athens region and disperse around Athens city, facilitating decentralization and urban expansion. Like Athens, the highly developed public transportation system contributes to the widespread decentralization of European cities.

Unfortunately, like many other southern European countries' governments, Greece's government has lost its say during this process of decentralization. The economic crisis striking across Europe has affected many EU countries, south Europe in particular. Lack of public finance has weakened these countries' ability to implement urban planning, enhancing the city's dependence on external drivers like transnational market entities to determine the layout of the expanding cities.¹³⁶ Without holistic planning of the government, the decentralization process has soon become unorganized urban sprawl. Corporations also established branches or factories in these areas alongside airports or transportation lines located away from the traditional city area.¹³⁷ However, without adequate urban planning, these randomly located periphery function zones appear to be messy.

Apart from urban sprawl, the settlement of refugees affects Greek cities' inclusiveness and profoundly impacts the urban planning of major cities in Europe. For Greece, they established the Refugee Restoration Committee of Greece (EAP) as early as 1923, handling refugees' urban restoration ever since then.¹³⁸ In the allocation of residential areas, the committee couldn't afford to settle the city's refugees. In this case, most refugee communities are placed in suburban areas, where spatial marginalization often occurs and causes the absence of basic social facilities and public service. Escalating exclusiveness and conflicts between the original citizens and refugees become a universal problem of Europe, southern European countries in particular, because of their geopolitical adjacency to the countries of refugee outflow.

136 Serafeim Polyzos, Dionisios Minetos, and Spyros Niavis. 2013. "Driving Factors and Empirical Analysis of Urban Sprawl in Greece." *Theoretical and Empirical Researches in Urban Management* 8 (1): 5–29.

137 Luca Salvati, and Marco Zitti. "Sprawl and Mega-events: Economic Growth and Recent Urban Expansion in a City Losing Its Competitive Edge (Athens, Greece)." *Urbani Izziv* 28, no. 2 (2017): 110–21.

138 Eleni G. Gavra. 2017. "The Refugee Establishment in Greece Of Modern Times: Institutional And Urban Tools For The Spatial Management." *Theoretical and Empirical Researches in Urban Management* 12 (3): 5–15.

V.Brazil

Developing countries usually benefit from the urbanization process, leading to a booming economy, thriving industries, and social order. However, low-quality urbanization has held back the development process of South American countries like Brazil. It has deepened the already existing severe class solidification and chaotic social order. The vast urban slums ("Favela" in Portuguese) have become a typical urban phenomenon across South America.

Like other Latin American giants, Brazil had a rapid urbanization process in the last century. The urban population ratio was 46.2% back in 1960, and the percentage surged to 87.1% in 2020.¹³⁹ The port cities and transportation hub cities of the South American countries have thrived on profits from international trade and attracted the vast majority of the labor to swarm into the cities, making the thriving cities overloaded. In Brazil, cities like Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Victoria are the country's vital economic engine and the areas burdened with widening income gap and severe favela problems. Neoliberalism and laissez-faire economy aggravate the inequality intensively, including labor, finance, and housing, which led to the segmentation between the affluent and the deprived. As a result, large numbers of the deprived groups occupy parts of private land or public space as their residence, which forms the favelas.

The favelas are invariably short of basic water and electricity supply, medical service, and education opportunities. The lack of supply of public service and social resources redistribution refrains the favela residents from development and breakthrough across the gap between classes. The most distinct feature of favelas and South American urban slums is their high crime rates. The secluded environment and lack of grassroots governance make the favelas heaven for the crime. With crime gangs and drug-trafficking cartels running across Latin America, illegal groups control favelas, which drastically endangers the deprived minorities and virtually erased them from the normal social fabric.

To increase urban sustainability, the Brazilian government commenced with the imposition of policies to improve the situation of the deprived groups. The local authorities attempted to legalize the illegal occupation of urban slums and upgrade the favelas. For instance, in Sao Paulo, the Favela Upgrading City Programme marked the comprehensive governance plan to upgrade basic facilities and fill the gap in public service in the favelas, which set an example for the rest of the Latin American countries when it comes to addressing urban slums.¹⁴⁰ The local authorities also try to increase the inclusiveness by including the favela residents into cities' holistic planning.

¹³⁹ "Brazil urban population", knoema, <https://knoema.com/atlas/Brazil/Urban-population>.

¹⁴⁰ Programme United. 2003. "UN-Habitat. The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements. Human Settlements, London: Earthscan Publications".

VI. Egypt

Egypt has one of the largest deltas in the world, namely the Nile Delta. Egypt's urbanization is concentrated in the Nile Delta for its advantaged geographical conditions. However, in light of metropolitan construction and urban expansion, resource endowments can turn into resource curses. Taking Mansoura and Talkha, two delta cities as examples, in 2000, urbanized areas covered 6.98% of the whole region, while the arable area decreased by 3.28% of the total area than in 1985. After ten years, the urbanized area is dramatically increased, accounting for 36.026% of the total area, while the arable area decreased intensely by 30.75% of the total area.¹⁴¹ As the megacities become overpopulated, Government-led migration programs are one of the most common ways to ensure the carrying capacity of the city is within the reasonable range. In Cairo, Egypt, the local authority launched the Master Plan of Cairo city during 1970-1990. The local authority aimed to divert portions of the population from Cairo City as the population in Cairo surged. They deployed new satellite towns and "homogenous sectors" on the desert land and rural areas. How to sustain the balance of spatial resource allocation becomes a global problem of building metropolitans.

Public transportation system like the Ring Road was also constructed to make those secondary cities as convenient as the original dwellings of the migrated people.¹⁴² However, just like many other satellite city projects, the new built-up towns lacked attractiveness due to the scarcity of basic public services like water supply and education institutions and massive illegal squatter constructions. The housing price along the Ring Road was high, which attracted the affluent to buy those housings adjacent to the Ring Road and forces the deprived families to return to Cairo City. The failure of new settlement causes a great loss of public finance and spatial resource, which reduces the incentive for local governments to deploy innovative and comprehensive strategies to instill sustainability in the megacities and organize regional urban collaborations.

141 Ibrahim Rizk Hegazy, and Mosbeh Rashed Kaloop. 2015. "Monitoring Urban Growth and Land Use Change Detection with GIS and Remote Sensing Techniques in Daqahlia Governorate Egypt." *International Journal of Sustainable Built Environment* 4 (1): 117–24.

142 Keith Sutton, and Wael Fahmi. 2001. "Cairo's Urban Growth and Strategic Master Plans in the Light of Egypt's 1996 Population Census Results." *Cities* 18 (3): 135–49.

Questions to Consider

- 1.What is the best way to accelerate industrial transfer between core cities and secondary cities?
- 2.Are there any other possible solutions for residents in conurbation to live a more integrated civic life?
- 3.What new changes can modern technology bring to urban development? Do you think the impact of new technology is completely positive?
- 4.Who are the victims of institutional discrimination and systematic marginalization? How to reinforce these marginalized groups in urban areas on the societal level?
- 5.How to protect the urban slum dwellers' right to survive and to develop?
- 6.How do you view the current resettlement measures for the migrant population and refugees in some metropolises? What changes can the local government make in terms of urban layout to address these problems?

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