

The Socio-Economic Impact of Urbanization

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ABSTRACT *The process of urbanization represents the increase in the proportion of people living in towns and cities as a result of people movement from rural areas to urban areas. Urbanization is widely accepted as a process with several consequences, such as social, economic or environmental and it usually occurs in developing countries. This complex process knows a strong global dimension that overcomes the spatial barriers, acting as real centers of progress with a significant impact on natural resources and on life quality.*

KEY WORDS *Urbanization, impact, urban areas, sustainable development*

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1. Introduction

The current global trend knows a massive expansion of urban areas, this growth being actually generated by the numerical population growth and migration. Urban development determines changes regarding the organization of places, economic and social changes but these effects exceed the territorial barriers and generate a broad impact.

Urbanization is seen as an effect of the current globalization phenomenon, with social aspects as well as the economic ones, representing the migration process of the population organizing in urban areas, areas considered to be true centers of progress that offer multiple options to residents. Cities are centers of changes, placed in a relationship of interdependence with demographic growth and economic growth.

Substantial expansion of urban areas is due population migration to these areas, the identification of new feature options that can ensure the raising of welfare levels of individuals and improve their conditions of life. Emphasis on the process of urbanization intensify pressure on resources, environment and its ecosystems. (Bradbury, A., (2009) "Understanding the evolution of community severance and its consequences on mobility and social cohesion" European Transport Conference)

2. Urbanization and its effects

In this moment we are facing for the first time in the history of mankind a change in the numerical proportion of population, the share of global urban population overcomes the rural population as result of recent statistics realized by specialists:

- 60% of the global population will live in urban areas until 2030, considering that the urban population in 1930 was 30% of the total global population
- 3.3 billion people live today in urban space
- daily approximately 180,000 people move in urban areas
- 60 million people from undeveloped countries move annually into urban spaces (urbanization has a magnitude much more pronounced than in developed countries). (<http://youthink.worldbank.org/issues/urbanization>), as follows:

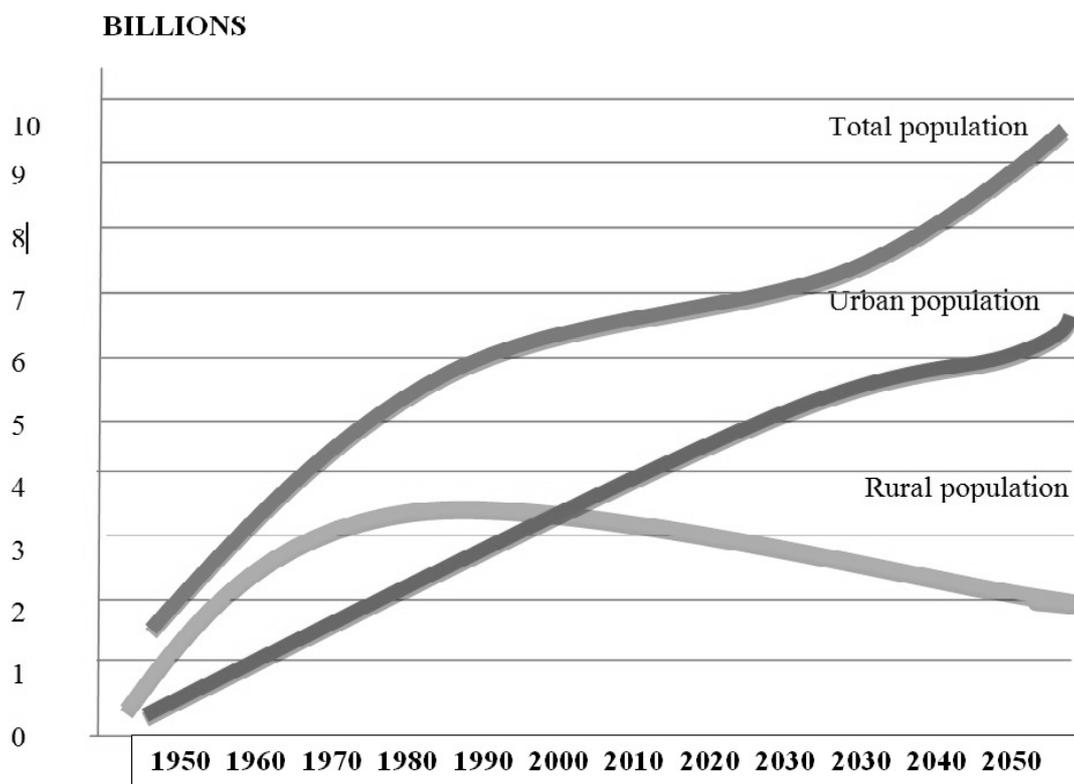


Figure 1. Global population evolution

Source: *Urban agriculture and the extending process of urbanization*, PhD Student Mădălina DOCIU, PhD Student Anca DUNARINTU

To adjust this intense global urbanization is required to adopt the measures and conditions to provide strategic planning and sustainable long-term space measures considering the principles of sustainable development and the impact of environmental condition on the quality of life. States have different levels of development, thus facing the urbanization impact differently, less developed states being the most affected by the impact of urbanization-regarding water resources, or wealth as provided in the next figure:

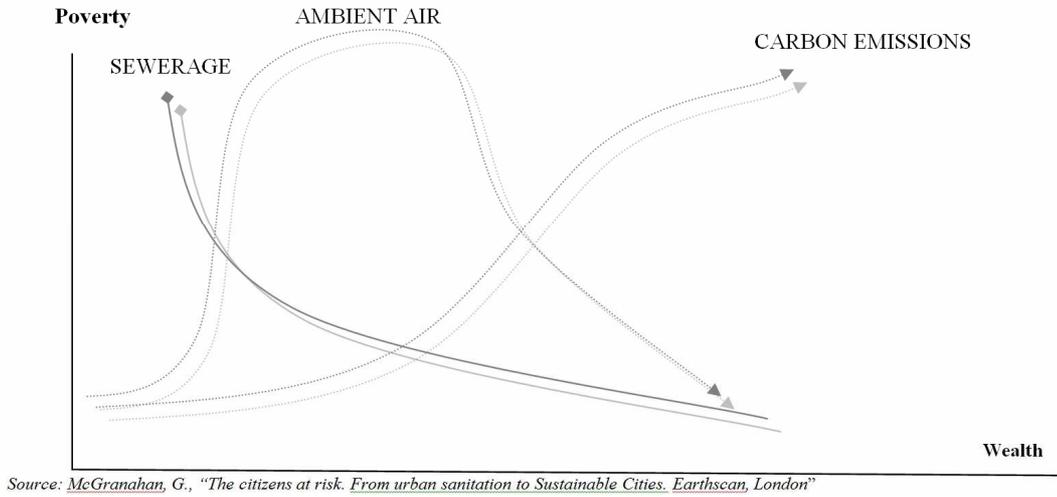
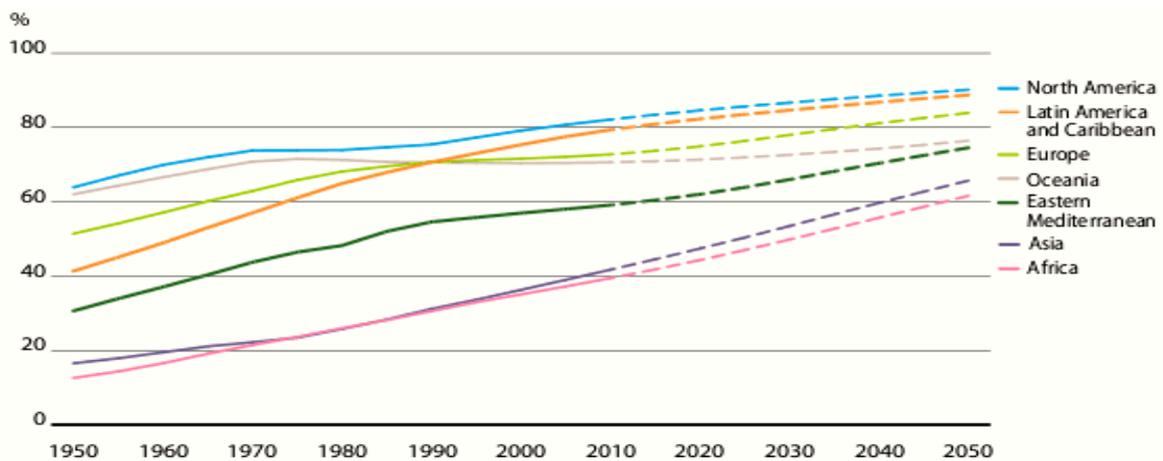


Figure 2. Urban transition

Currently, the process of urbanization is supported equally both as a social process, as well as an economic and territorial one. (*Suburbanization in Global Society (Research in Urban Sociology, Volume 10, Emerald Group Publishing Limited)*) Urbanization changes the nature of the cause of both economic and social implications, and the role of the internal relationships, families of redefining the concepts of individual and social responsibility. (*Gilbert, O.L. "The ecology of urban habitat"- Chapman and Hall, London*)

3. Social and economic impact of the urbanization

Migration of population to urban areas has gotten increasing lately, which is why the statistics made some worrisome scenario that anticipate the weighting of the urban population and the impact of this process at the global level, as follows in the next figure:



Source: <http://urban-age.net/cities/>

Figure 3. Global urban population

Urban areas have a powerful influence upon places as a result of several factors such as the degree of use of land or the infrastructure of market makers; the main social effects of this process are:

1. Contact with the labour market: established in urban areas population adjusts to match the work market, specializing in the needs of existing brand and thus framing and adaptation, as well as winning amounts to cover everyday needs
2. Families and the urban society: it has been often seen a decline in the concept of the family, through the proliferation of less traditional forms and new types of households. This tendency is manifested as a consequence of the diversity of the many options for individuals, in which individuals are organizing into form collective units.
3. Domestic relations: an increase in the rate of participation of women in the labor market, they became even decision makers who have had to balance professional responsibilities with the family responsibilities
4. Fertility Rates: stepping from rural social space in urban space generates changes in the natural growth rate of population, the phenomenon manifested setting up smaller families, with a reduced number of members (*Bradbury, A*).
5. State of health and pollution: development of new urban areas without complying with the necessary measures for the development of sustainable areas determine a negative impact both on the environment, but by the general condition of reciprocity and on the health of individuals, often affected by increased pollution levels in these areas, in particular the pollution of air and water.
6. Access to education and training: access of the population of rural space set in urban space ensure their access to education, personal and intellectual development, which provide new features and modes of the evolution of the individual
7. Poverty, lack of opportunities and problems of psychological adaptation: this overlapping of issues is identified to a part of the population displaced by the urban space, which fails to adapt, to align to the standards of urban areas, where evolution, social and economic development are the real engines of existence, thus generating a chain of negative effects from deviant behaviors to offenses or violent personalities, as determined by the mirage of developed urban areas, which offers multiple possibilities, being real centers of development, progress and social well-being (*Gilbert, O.L.*).

Economic impact of urbanization includes both positive and negative aspects, with direct influence on places, but also on the areas that exceed those limits, as follows:

1. the development and diversification of the commercial activities, plus the opportunity of creating new jobs
2. bridging the gap between business people
3. access to new technologies and to the various areas of activity, which ensures raising incomes and the development of individuals
4. development of infrastructure and increase of the number of motor vehicles, which generates both an intensification of resource consumption, and an increase in the level of air pollution and their impact on the environment and on the health condition of individuals. This intensification of transport is determined by the density increased in these areas, but also by the low level of development of the public transport service

5. access to facilities, to an environment institutional and cultural developed ensuring the balance between resources, offer of goods and services (Towards sustainable human settlements development in the ECE region, Economic commission for Europe)

	<u>1990-99</u>	<u>2000-08</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012f</u>
			<i>(millions of units)</i>			
TOTAL SALES	39.20	49.55	50.42	56.82	58.89	61.39
North America*	16.36	19.01	12.61	13.96	15.22	16.10
Canada	1.27	1.60	1.46	1.56	1.59	1.61
United States	14.55	16.39	10.40	11.55	12.73	13.50
Mexico	0.54	1.02	0.75	0.85	0.90	0.99
Western Europe	13.11	14.48	13.62	12.98	12.80	12.16
Germany	3.57	3.28	3.81	2.92	3.17	3.24
Eastern Europe	1.18	2.73	2.58	3.14	3.90	4.25
Russia	0.78	1.54	1.47	1.91	2.65	2.95
Asia	6.91	10.97	17.68	22.47	22.50	24.23
China	0.43	3.14	7.32	9.41	10.04	10.94
India	0.31	0.83	1.43	1.87	1.95	2.09
South America	1.64	2.36	3.93	4.27	4.47	4.65
Brazil	0.94	1.46	2.53	2.69	2.64	2.74

Source: Real Time World Statistics, <http://www.worldometers.info/>

Figure 4. The evolution of the overall volume of car sales

4. Conclusions

All the situations we face globally in terms of urban and spatial extent of the phenomenon of urbanization, need an urgent adoption of measures and methods to minimize the adverse effects and to strengthen their benefits, one of the solutions is the orientation to green cities, subjected to the principles of sustainable development and the establishment of urban spaces adapted to the environmental principles. Also, should be taken into consideration the development of new opportunities in rural areas in order to prevent the realization of scenarios regarding the spatial migration trend of rural to urban areas in the following years.

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