

Geography of Urban Areas

Urban Definition

- Urban – Of, living, or situated in a city or town.
 - Definitions of urban areas vary by region but generally are a central place for a tributary area that include a variety of shops, banks and offices
- Urbanization - The increasing number of people that migrate from rural to urban areas. It predominantly results in the physical growth of urban areas, be it horizontal or vertical.



Problems with Defining a City

- No international definition for what constitutes a city
 - India defines an urban center as 5,000 inhabitants, with adult males employed primarily in nonagricultural work
 - The United States Census Bureau defines a city as a densely populated area of 2,500 people or more
 - South Africa counts as a city any settlement of 500 or more people

Push and Pull Factors of Urbanization

Push Factors

- Rural Areas have less opportunities
 - Education
 - Jobs
 - Entertainment
 - Services
- Natural Disasters
- Decline of Family Farming
- Poor Infrastructure
- Security

Pull Factors

- More Opportunities
- Higher density of services
- Entertainment destinations
- Perceived potential economic benefit
- Infrastructure
- Social Services

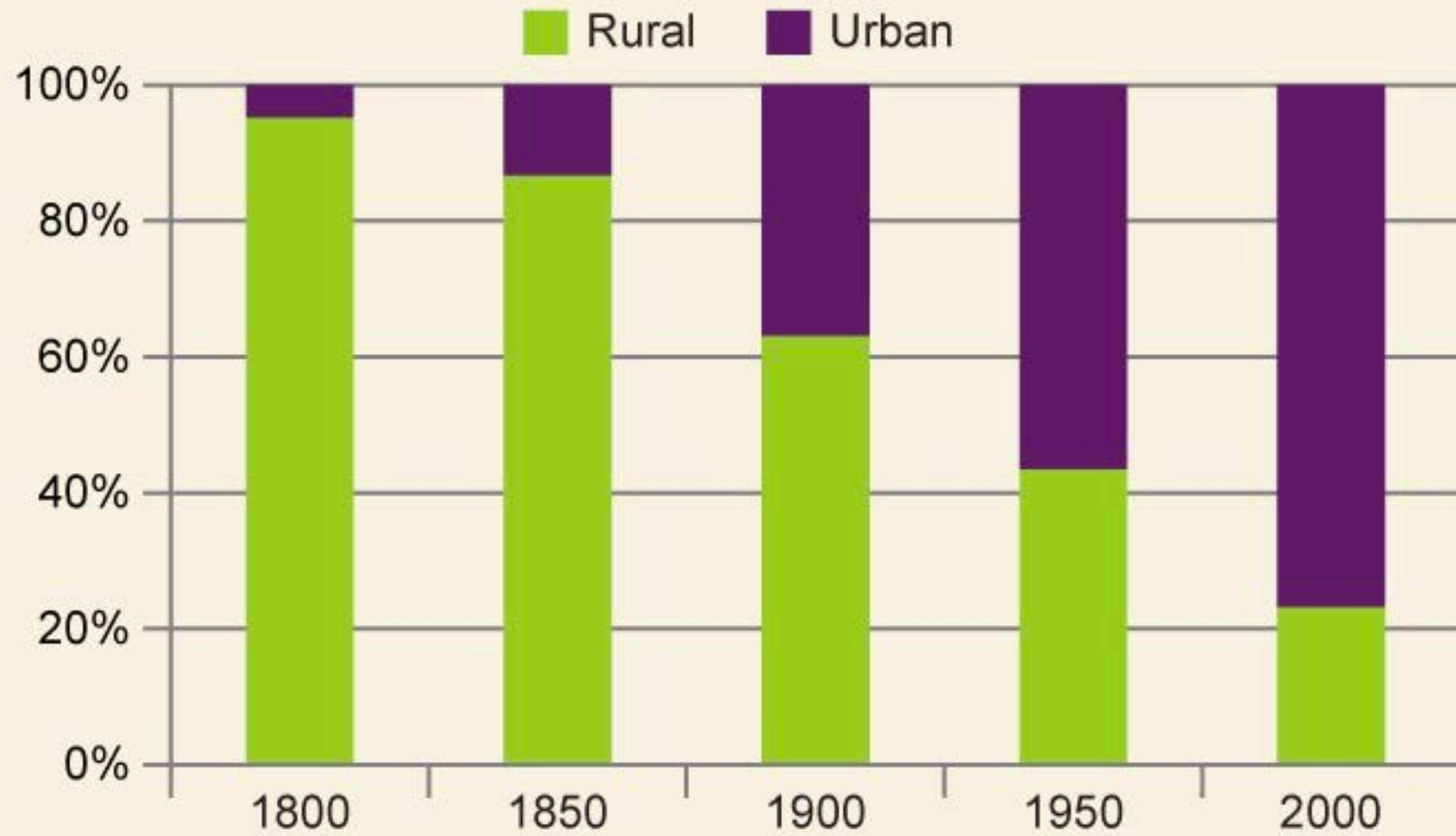
Earliest Uses for Cities

- First cities developed in Mesopotamia and Asia Minor around 10,000 – 12,000 years ago
 - Connected to **First Agriculture Revolution**
 - Domestication of certain plants and animals
 - Stable food source, needed more workers to produce food that provided for more people, that needed more workers to support production of more food, etc...
 - Densely clustered around water source
 - People grouped together for mutual protection
 - Allowed for specialization of labor and cultural developments

Reasons for Rapid Industrialization

- Urbanization increase rapidly in the 19th and 20th centuries
 - Industrial Revolution – (18th – 19th century) Changes in production leading to economic centers growing in the cities
 - **Enclosure Movement** – (18th-19th century) Shift to private ownership of farmland.
 - **Second Agricultural Revolution** – (18th – 20th century) Industrial technology applied to food production. Allowed for more production with less workers
 - **Medical Revolution** – (19th-20th century) Improved medical technology (vaccinations) and sanitation

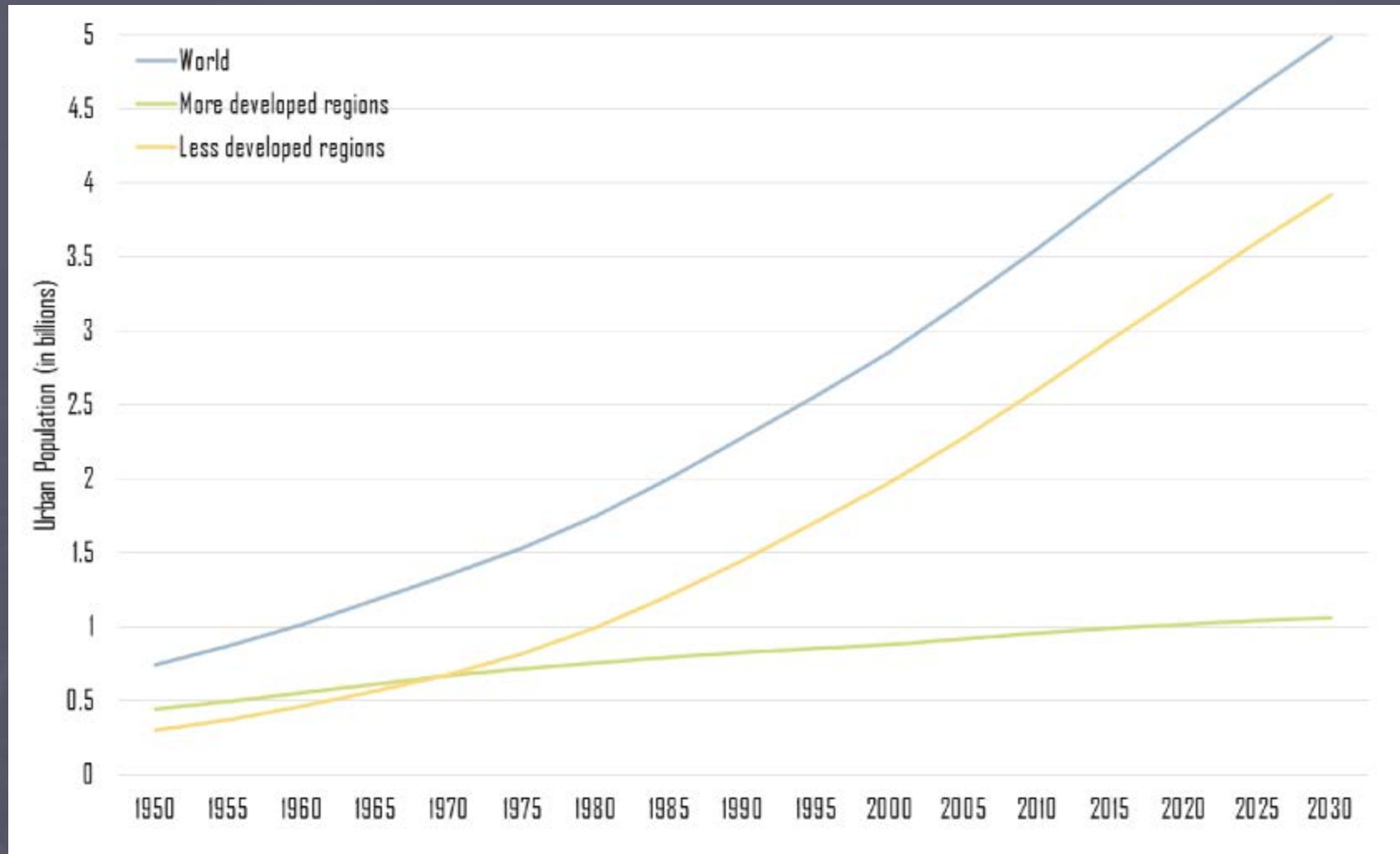
Percent of U.S. Population



Differences in Urbanization

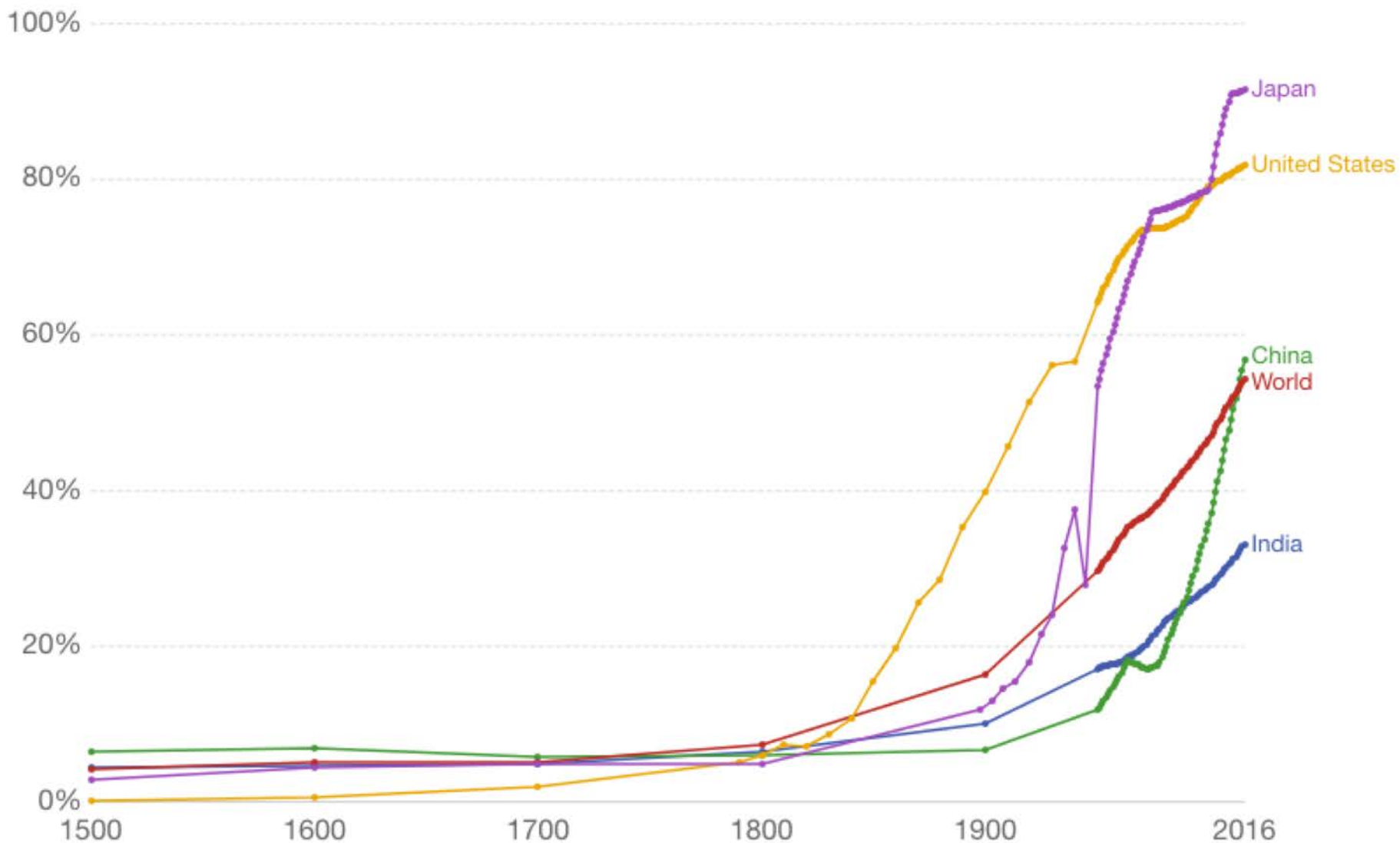
- More Developed Countries have higher rates of urbanized population than LDCs
- Developing countries are rapidly urbanizing
 - Caused by massive migration away from the country
 - People flock to the cities searching for a better life
 - Often resulting in high unemployment

World Urban Population, 1950-2010 with Projections to 2030 (in billions)



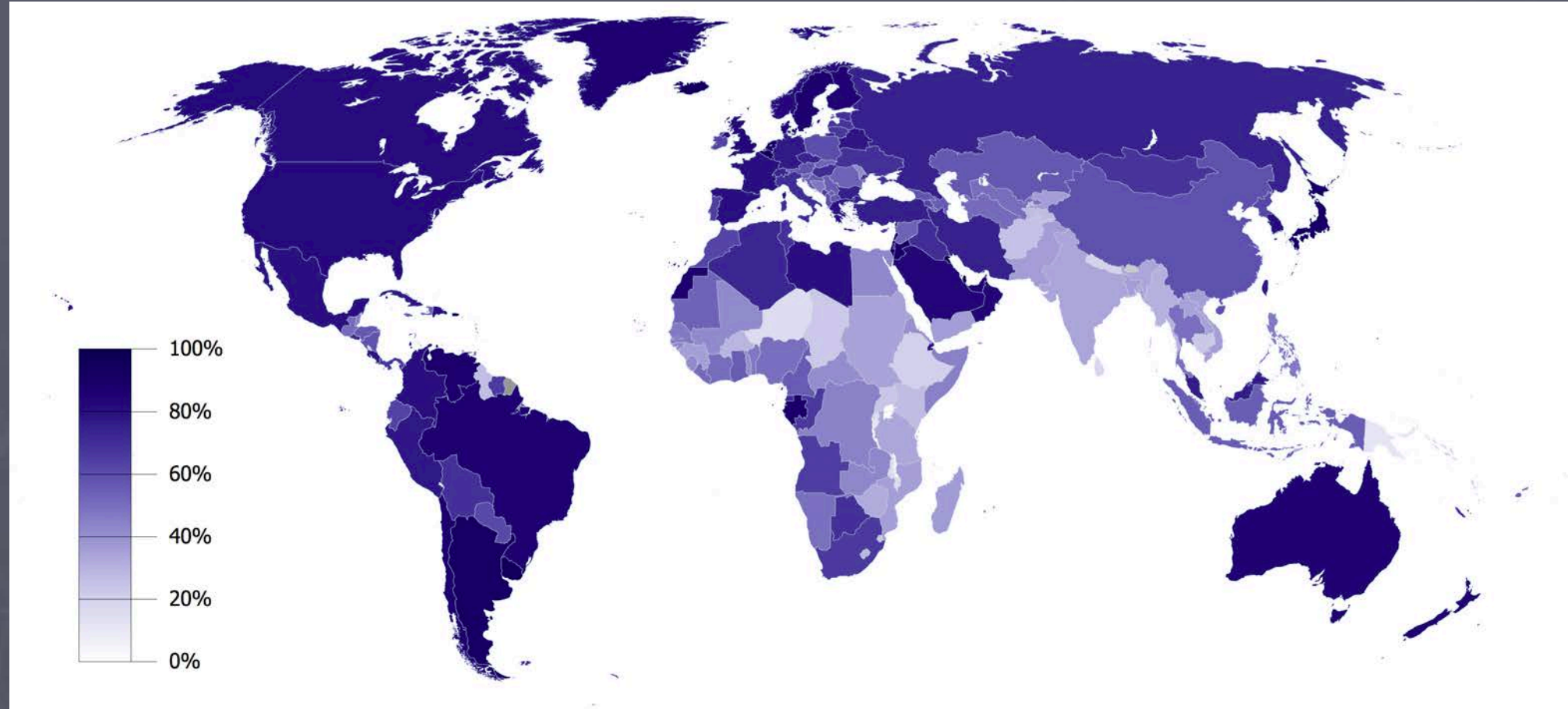
Urbanization over the past 500 years

Share of the total population living in urban areas.



Source: OWID based on UN World Urbanization Prospects 2018 and historical sources (see Sources) OurWorldInData.org/urbanization • CC BY
Note: Urban areas are based on national definitions and may vary by country.

Urbanization Rate by Country (2018)



Suburbanization

- Commuter settlements
 - Located on fringe areas where majority of residents commute to CBD
- Manufacturing
 - Requires large footprint
 - Cheaper land in suburban areas
- Residential
 - High land costs closer to CBD
 - Larger houses at lower costs with more space in suburbs
- Retail
 - Move of retailers to where the people are, instead of having people come to them
 - Rise of shopping malls in the 1950s



Urban Growth Factors

- Migration of people to the cities
- Higher natural population growth rates for recent migrants
 - Because employment is unreliable, large families construct a more extensive family support system
 - Family sizes shrink when job security increases and women enter the work force

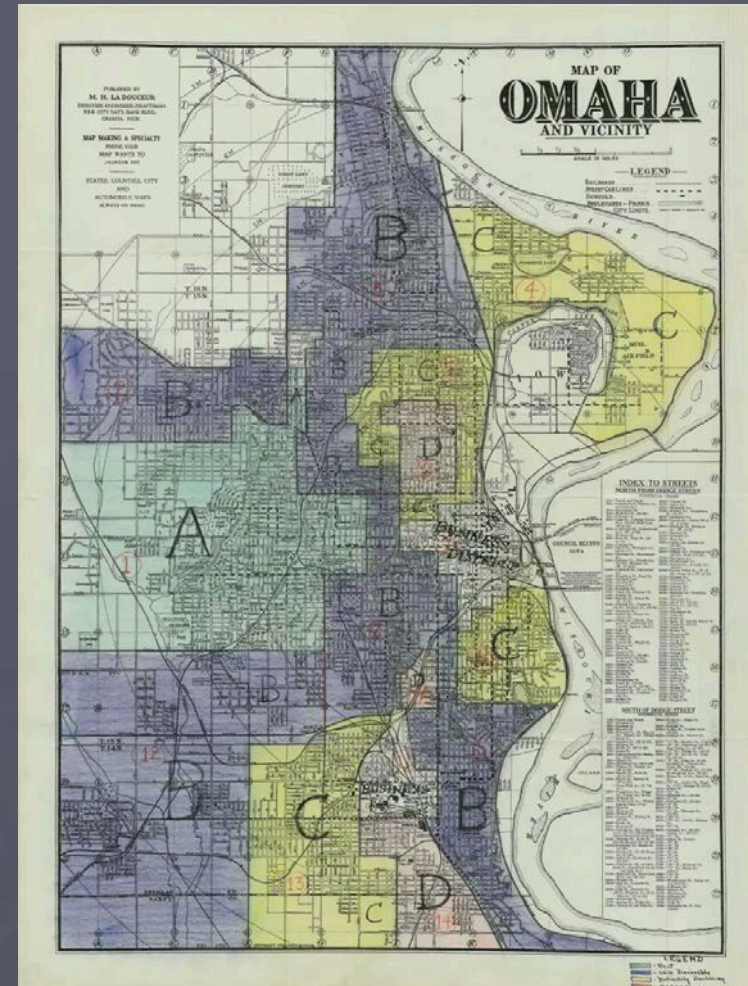
Problems of Urbanization

- Overpopulation
- Unemployment
 - Leading to higher rates of crime
- Squatter Settlements
- Traffic
- Pollution
 - Noise, Light, Air, Water
- Stress
- Maintaining Services



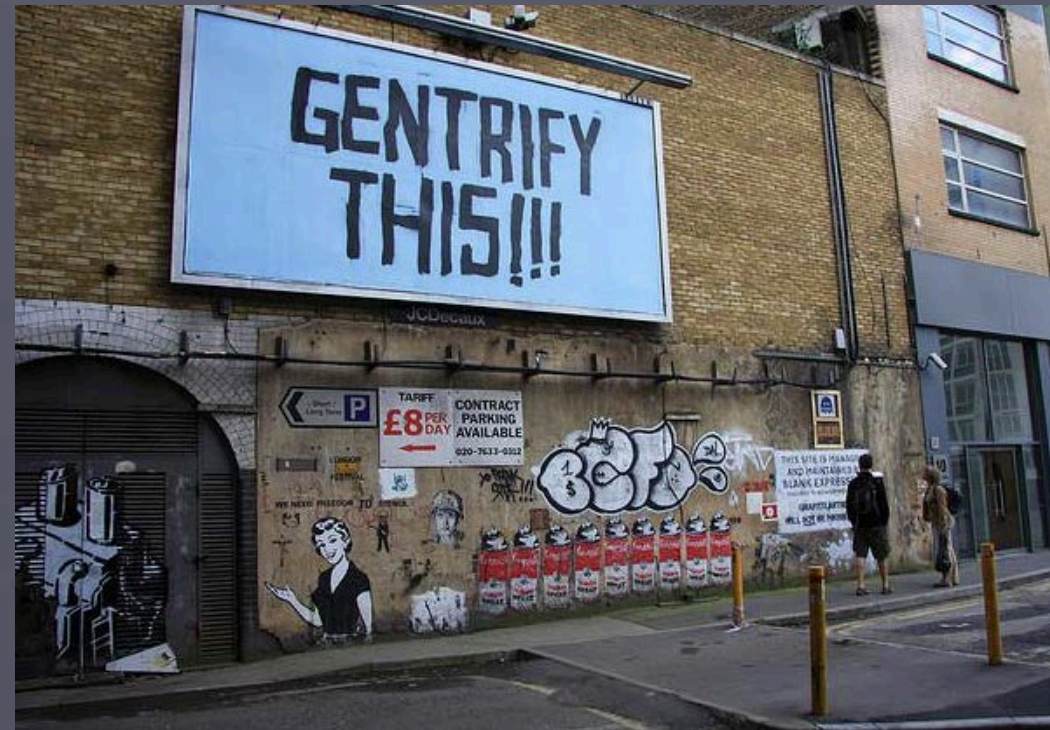
Urbanization as connected to Race in America

- Redlining
 - Government policy (started in 1930s) making it difficult for people in predominantly neighborhoods made up of people of color from getting home loans
- Restrictive Covenants
 - Establishing of neighborhoods (especially in the suburbs) with stipulations in the bylaws of who is able to live there
- “White Flight”
 - Rapid movement of whites to suburban areas in the 1960s & 1970s away from areas



Gentrification/New Urbanism

- Redevelopment and revitalization of urban areas meant to attract more middle class renters and home owners
 - Usually at the expense of present renters/tenets no longer being able to afford area



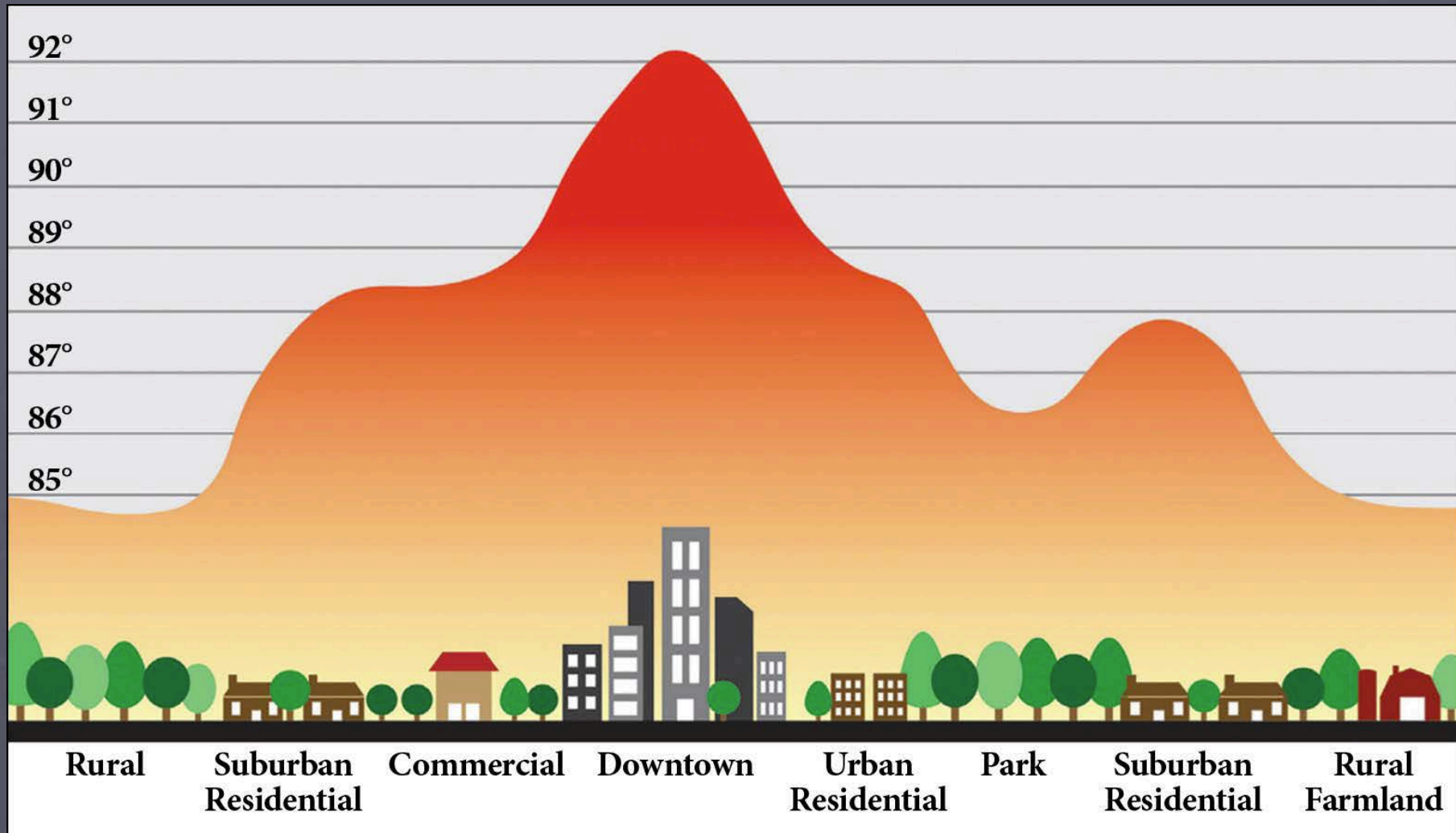
Parts of the City

- Squatter Settlements/Slums – Very low wealth communities that grow unplanned



- Ethnic Neighborhoods/ Ghettos – Parts of the city inhabited by people of a certain ethnic group

Heat Island Effect



Specialized Cities

- Some cities have greater importance than others and can be grouped together through special characteristics
 - Primate City
 - Gateway City
 - Megacity
 - Megalopolis
 - World City



Gateway City

- A city that controls a, or acts as a control center for a much larger area.
 - Ex. St Louis as the Gateway to the West



Primate City

- A city that is more than 2 times the size of all the other cities in the country or region
 - Ex. Bangkok, Thailand



Megacity

- Any city that is over 10 million people
 - Ex. Sao Paulo, Brazil



Megalopolis

- Two or more urban centers that mold together to form one continuous urban area
 - Ex. BosNyWash Corridor or Rhine/Ruhr River Valley



World City

- A city with international prestige and importance as an economic or cultural centers
 - Ex. London, England

