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2nd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABILITY SCIENCE

URBAN AND RURAL CITIES Socio-economic issues in a sustainable development perspective

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URBAN AND RURAL CITIES

Socio-economic issues

in a sustainable development perspective

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Introduction

Many different types of cities exist
– from large industrial towns to small rural towns –
in which different types of needs emerge

Accordingly, dwellers' behaviour has a variety of
impacts on the economy, environment and society

Three main issues

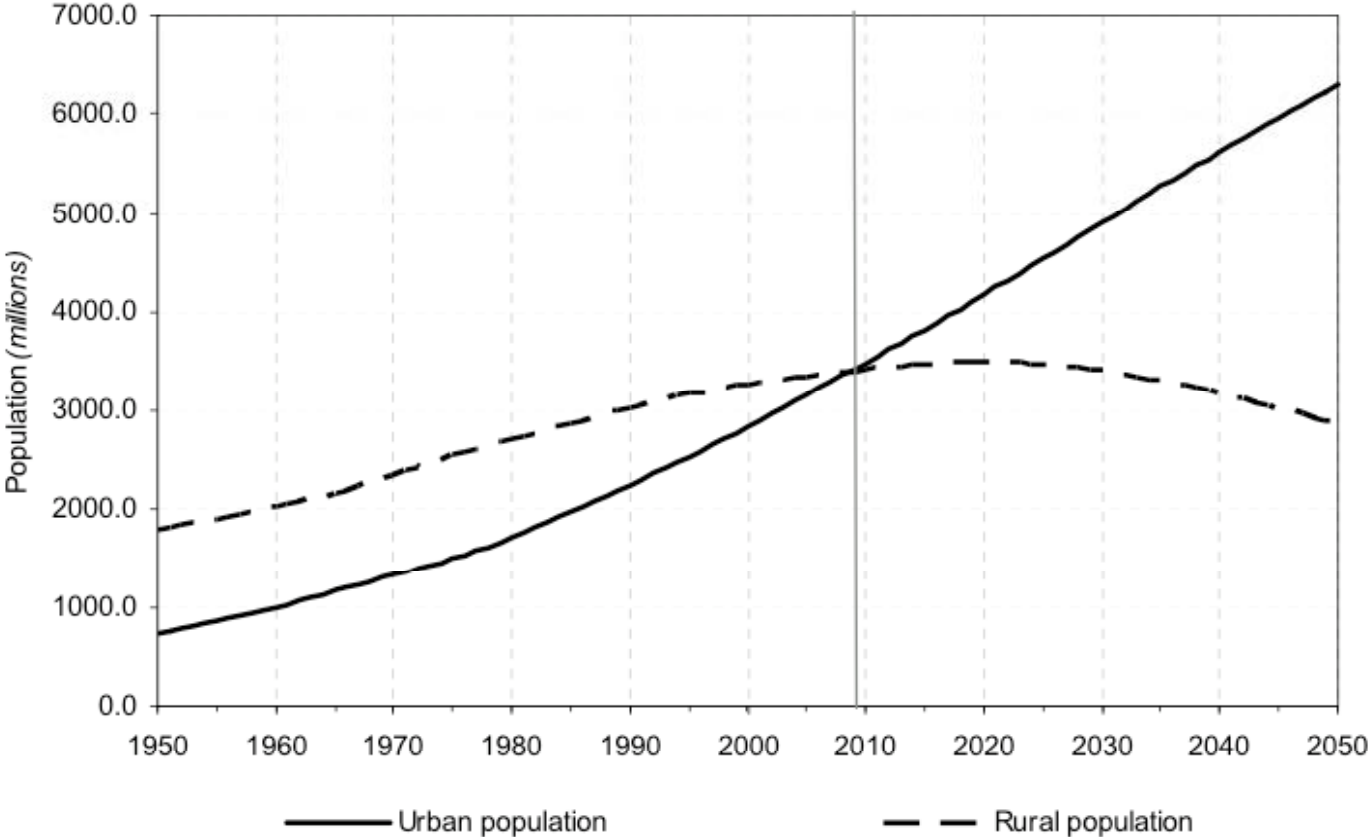
1. **Population movements** between urban and rural areas
2. **Different production patterns and lifestyles** in different types of human settlements
3. **Different forces driving change** in production and consumption

To analyse the economic significance of these issues, I propose three economic models supporting controversial theoretical and ideological points of view:

- *Mainstream Libertarian* (market-led)
- *Keynesian* (state-led)
- *Post-development* (nature-driven)

1. Population movement between urban and rural areas

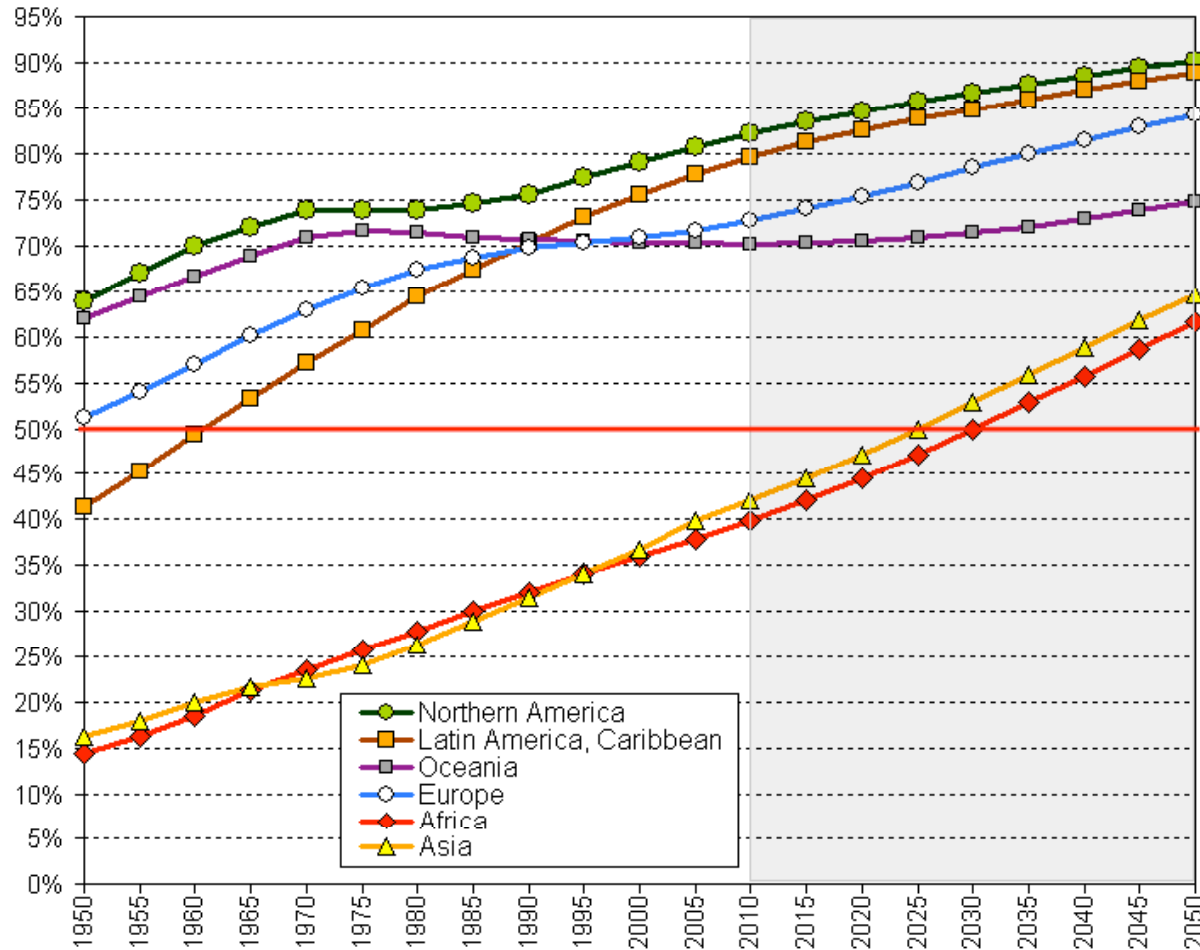
Figure I. Urban and rural populations of the world, 1950-2050



United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division
World Urbanization Prospects: The 2009 Revision

1. Population movement between urban and rural areas

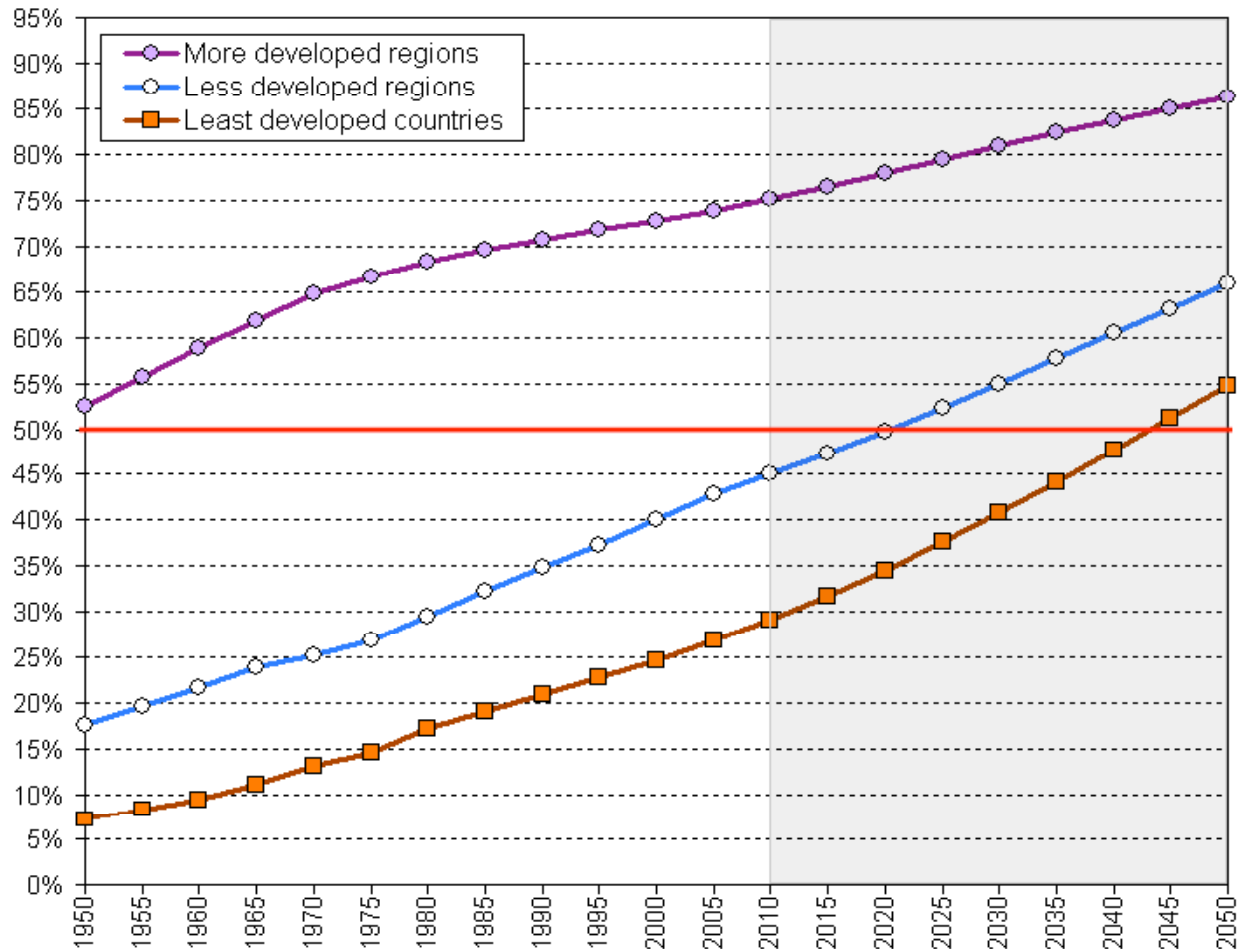
Figure 1: Urban population by major geographical area (in per cent of total population)



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division: *World Urbanization Prospects, the 2009 Revision*. New York, 2010

1. Population movement between urban and rural areas

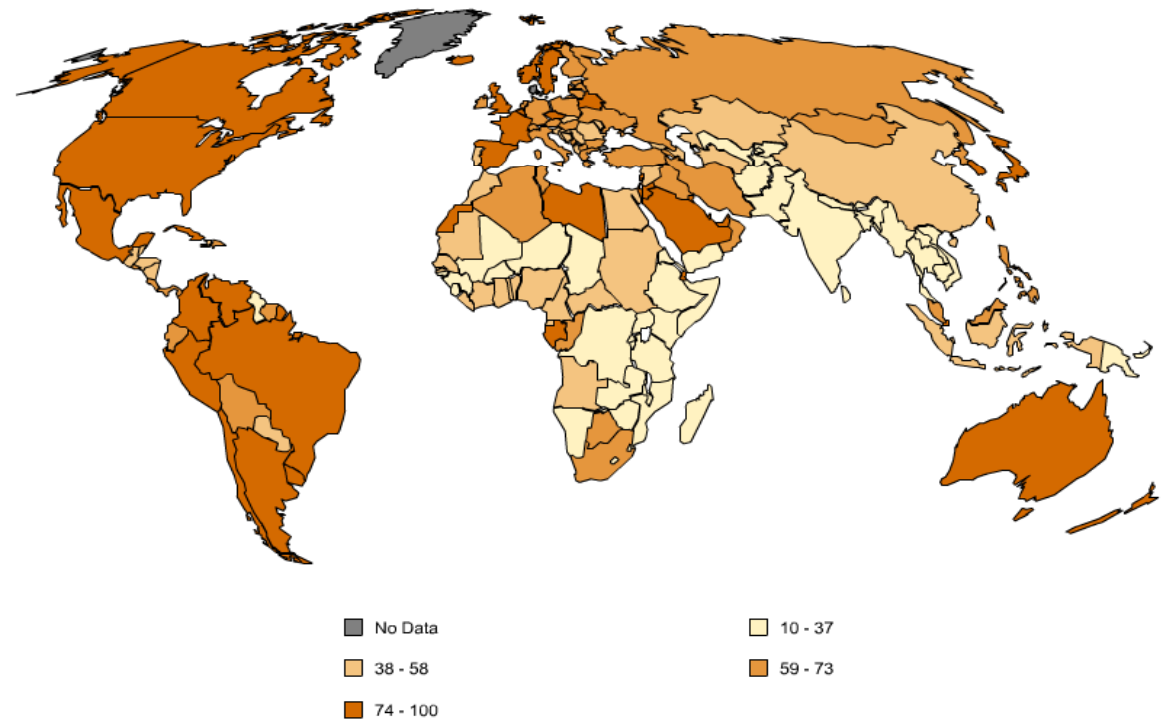
Figure 2: Urban population by major development regions (in per cent of total population)



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division: *World Urbanization Prospects, the 2009 Revision*. New York, 2010

1. Population movement between urban and rural areas

Urban Population (%)

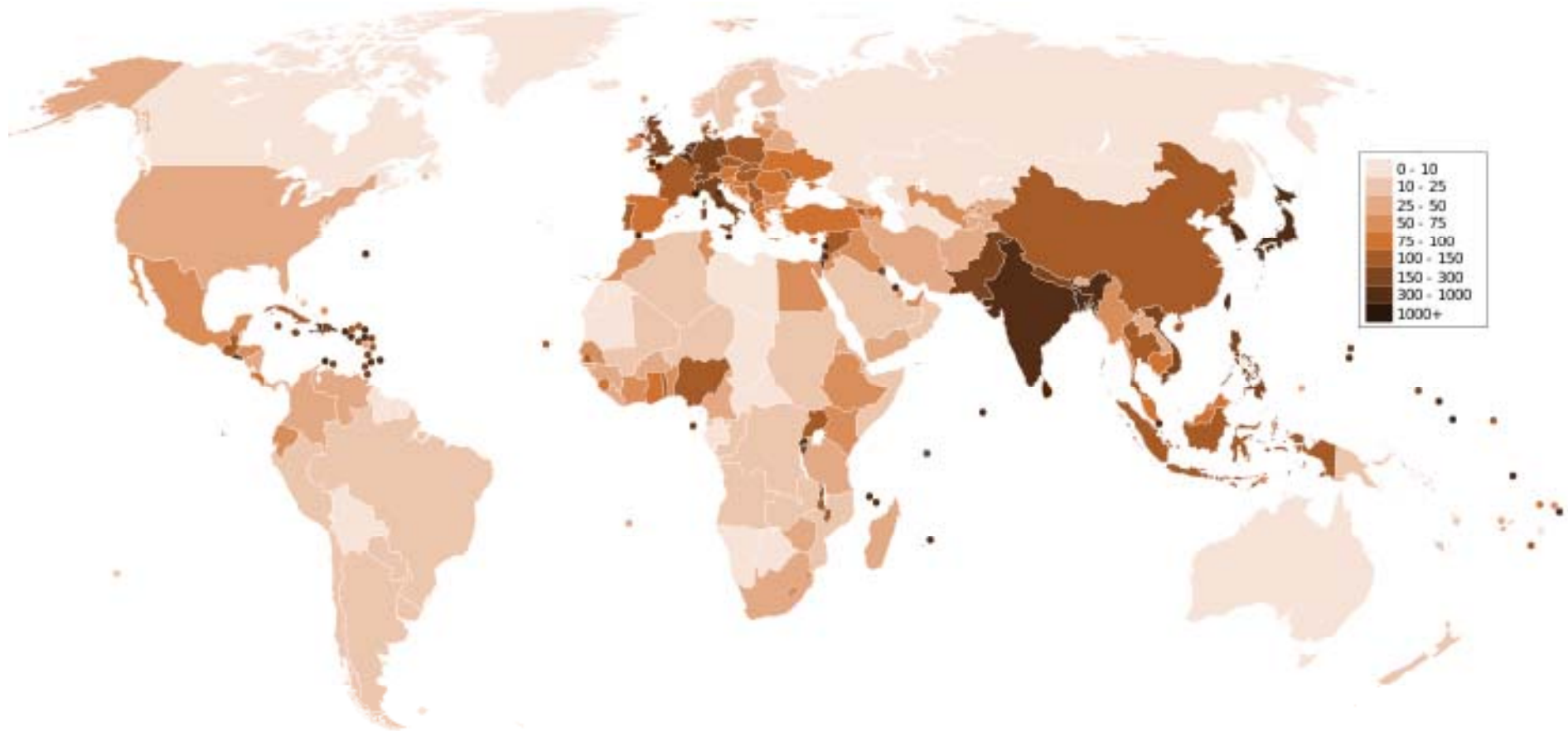


Sources: PRB 2009 World Population Data Sheet

<http://www.prb.org/Datafinder/Topic/Map.aspx?variable=123> Downloaded 2010

1. Population movement between urban and rural areas

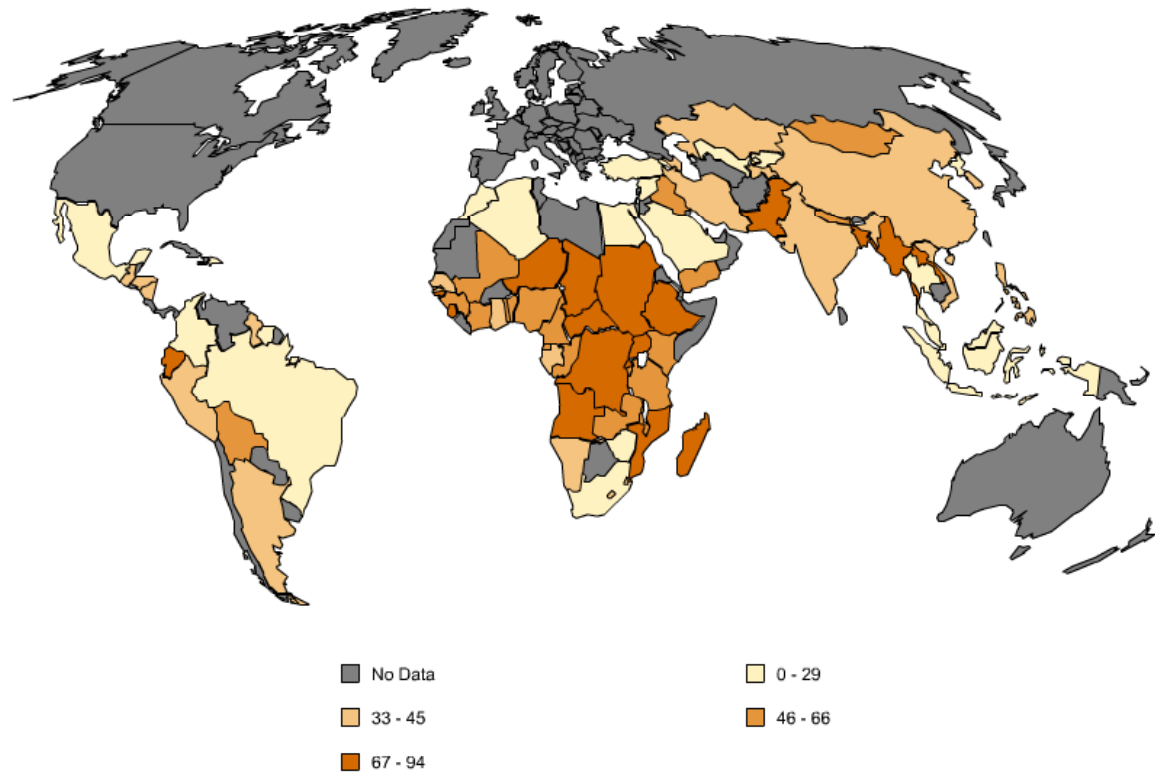
Countries by population density



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki> Downloaded 2010, data 2007

1. Population movement between urban and rural areas

Urban Population Living in Slums, 2005 (%)



Sources: Urban Population, Development and the Environment 2007 (UN, 2008).

<http://www.prb.org/Datafinder/Topic/Map.aspx?variable=123> Downloaded 2010

1. Population movement between urban and rural areas

Reasons explaining the movement:

- Earning and income differentials
(wages, profits, rents)
- National and local policies
(agricultural and rural/urban development)
- Differentials in Quality of Life
(culture, landscape, environment)

1. Population movement between urban and rural areas

Alternative economic approaches

Mainstream Libertarian (market-led)

- Prices and Resources

Keynesian (state-led)

- Prices and Policies

Post-development (nature-driven).

- Prices and Consumer Preferences

2. Different production patterns and lifestyles in different types of human settlements

Supply and distribution systems as complex combinations of activities, functions and relations enabling citizens to meet their requirements

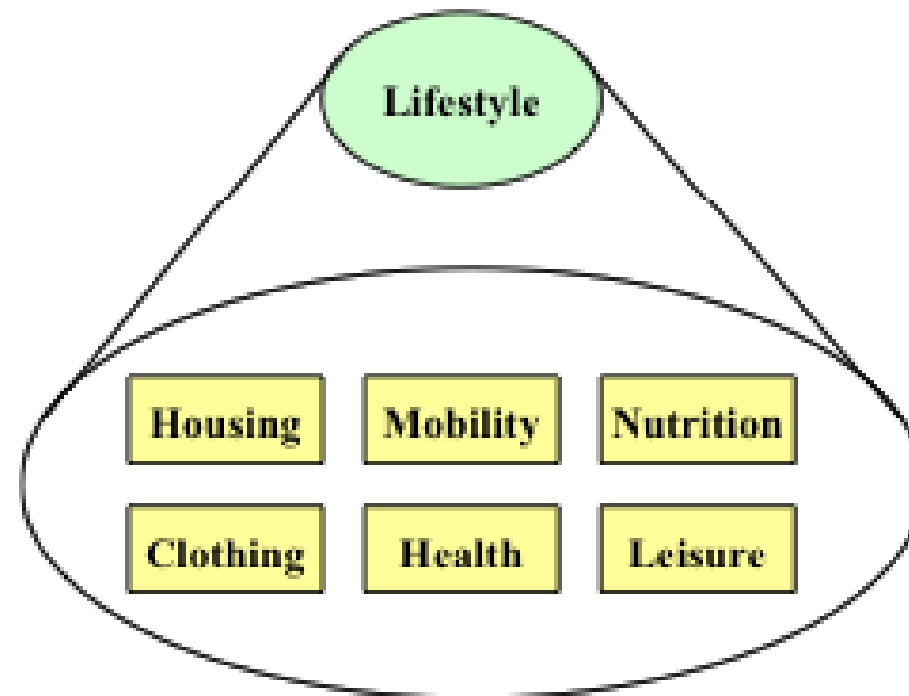
- production, handling, storage, transport, process, package, wholesale, retail, etc.

Urban and rural patterns may diverge

- Quantity of goods (produced and consumed)
- Quality of goods (produced and consumed)
- Energy requirements (for production and consumption)

Then, **Quality of Life** differs in urban and in rural areas

2. Different production patterns and lifestyles in different types of human settlements



(Hertwich, 2003)

2. Different production patterns and lifestyles in different types of human settlements

The main difference between urban and rural areas refers to *Density*

	Urban	Rural
<i>Housing</i>	Concentrated	Scattered
<i>Education</i>	Higher levels	Basic
<i>Mobility</i>	Slow – short distance	Fast – long distance
<i>Nutrition</i>	Large retailers	Local food
<i>Clothing</i>	Formal	Casual
<i>Health</i>	Easy access	Hard life
<i>Leisure</i>	Culture and sport	Hike and party

2. Different production patterns and lifestyles in different types of human settlements

Different density implies different costs and different energy consumption

In **developed countries** with high income consumers with modern urban consumption patterns, and more traditional rural consumption patterns, urban households may require fossil fuel and electricity in lower quantities than rural households.

In **developing countries** with relatively affluent and modern urban consumption patterns, and poorer and more traditional rural consumption patterns, urban households often consume far more fossil fuel and electricity than rural households.

While cars offer convenient, flexible and rapid transportation, in **rural areas** and smaller cities, in the growing number of **megacities**, travel by car is commonly slow, expensive and unhealthy, due to congestion, the costs of car ownership and parking, and air pollution.

(UN-DESA, 2007)

2. Different production patterns and lifestyles in different types of human settlements

Alternative economic approaches

Mainstream Libertarian (market-led)

- Market, through **Prices**, is the organising principle of the economy

Keynesian (state-led)

- Prices and the **Fiscal system and Policies** affect spatial distribution of activities

Post-development (nature-driven)

- **Needs** and the **Willingness to Pay** for environmental goods drive the market

3. Concluding remarks

Different forces drive change in production and consumption

Drivers of change according to different economic approaches

Prices

Mainstream Libertarian (market-led)

Policies

Keynesian (state-led)

Needs

Post-development (nature-driven)

3. Concluding remarks

Prices		
	Urban Areas	Rural Areas
<i>Mainstream Libertarian</i>	Resource availability and Technology	Resource availability and Technology
<i>Keynesian</i>	High Income and Regulation	Public goods and Subsidies
<i>Post-development</i>	Resource management	Protection and biodiversity

3. Concluding remarks

	Policies	
	Urban Areas	Rural Areas
<i>Mainstream Libertarian</i>	Competition	Competition
<i>Keynesian</i>	Urban planning Industrial policy	Incentives Rural policy
<i>Post-development</i>	Cleaning the environment	Promoting a self-sustaining equilibrium

3. Concluding remarks

Needs		
	Urban Areas	Rural Areas
<i>Mainstream Libertarian</i>	Consumer-driven	Consumer-driven
<i>Keynesian</i>	Cultural goods Industrial goods Advanced services	Food Industry Services
<i>Post-development</i>	Low energy Consumption Housing	Food for local consumption Environment

Conclusion

Is there an *URBAN BIAS* in policies for sustainability and sustainable technical change?

Urban and rural areas form one system and the decisions taken for one area have an impact on the other area that is often unintended and unanticipated

The penetration of the urban-industrial economy into the countryside only increases the exploitation of natural resources in the rural society for the benefit of the urban economy

While government may have fewer responsibilities in a society and economy driven by market forces, it will have to be more effective and efficient in the execution of its remaining responsibilities to safeguard the public interest, assist the poor and protect the environment, while promoting urban economic growth.

(UN 2001, p. 3)