

Urbanization Trends with Philippine Context

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Urbanization refers to the transition of population from rural to urban areas. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN DESA (2019) defined urbanization as a complex socio-economic process that alters the built environment, converting formerly rural into urban settlements with consideration to population distribution from rural to urban areas. Urbanization also leads to changes in the lifestyle, employment, and culture which can alter the social and demographic structure.

One of the challenges for the urbanization researchers is a concrete definition and global standard for urban environment. Classification of urban area varies from one country to another. The United Nations primarily uses the number of individuals as the main indicator of urban area. This classification alone is highly relative that it may range from 200 to 40,000 inhabitants. Other factors include population density, land cover expansion, employment in non-agricultural sector and distance between residences (UN DESA, 2018a; McGranahan and Satterthwaite, 2014). The United Nations used urban agglomeration, city proper and metropolitan concepts for the assessment of world urbanization projections. (UN DESA, 2019).

Urbanization is multi-faceted and highly correlated to sustainable development goals. The interactions between and among the economy, population and environment are essential in achieving sustainable development goal of making inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and communities. A sustainably managed urban area can help build infrastructure and policies that support public health, robust economy and resilient communities while minimizing adverse impacts to environmental resources (McGranahan and Satterthwaite, 2014; UN ESCAP, 2018).

In year 1950, 70.39% of the world human population reside in the rural areas which accounts to 1.79 billion. This annual rural percentage was reduced to 53.32% in year 2000

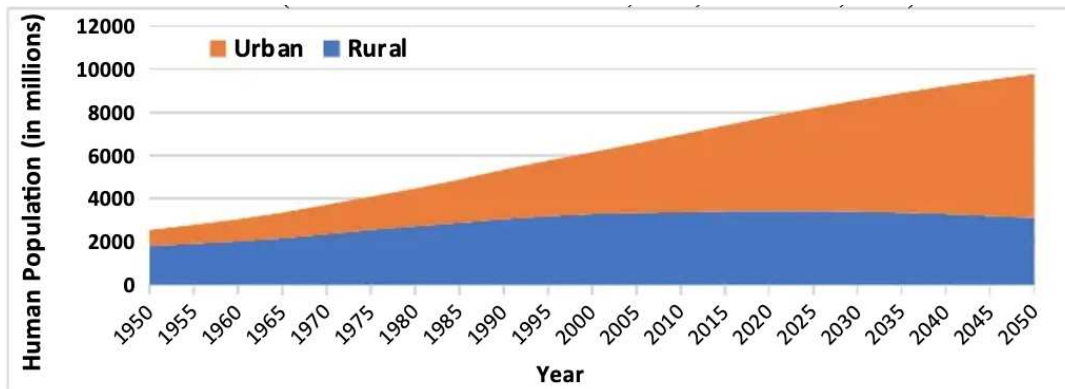


Figure 1. World's Rural and Urban Population (UN DESA, 2018a)

(Figure 1). Then in 2007, half of the world's population reside in urban areas. This urbanization trend will continue to the next decades (UN DESA, 2018a). Last year, 4.38 billion out of the total projected world population of 7.80 billion people are urban inhabitants. By year 2050, the urban population could reach to about 6.68 billion people which translates to an increase in urban percentage of 68.4% (Figure 1).

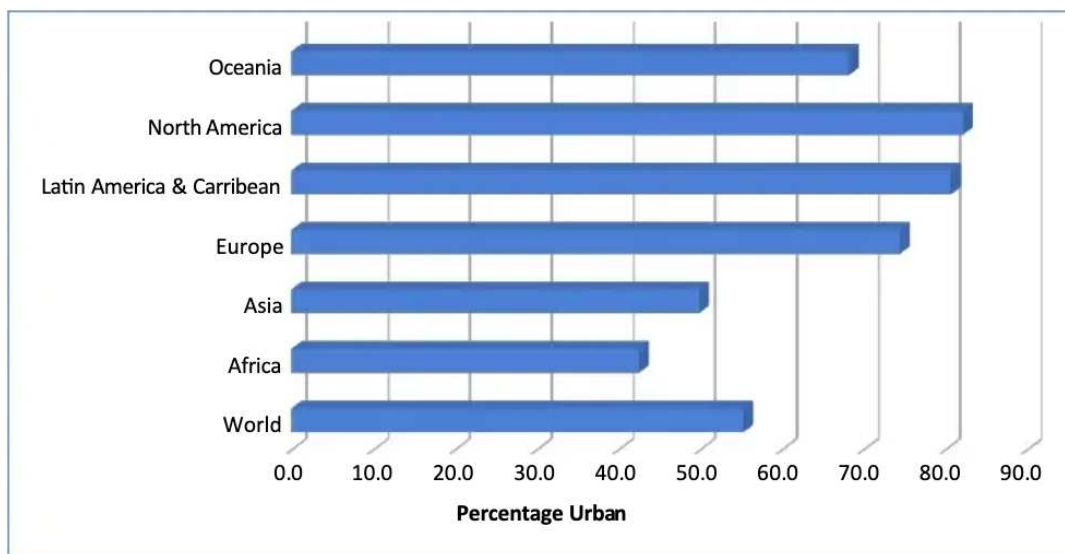


Figure 2. Annual Percentage of Population Residing in Urban Areas by Regions (UN DESA, 2018a)

In terms of major geographic regional data, North America including Canada and United

States, continues to be dominantly urban with 82.2% followed by Latin America and Caribbean with 80.7%. Africa and Asia regions lagged with 42.5 and 49.9% respectively (Figure 2). Although Asia and African continents have low annual urban percentage, they remain to have the highest population among the regions assessed (UN DESA, 2018a) (Figure 3). Urban growth is forecasted to occur in Asian and African regions within 3 decades (UN Habitat, 2019).

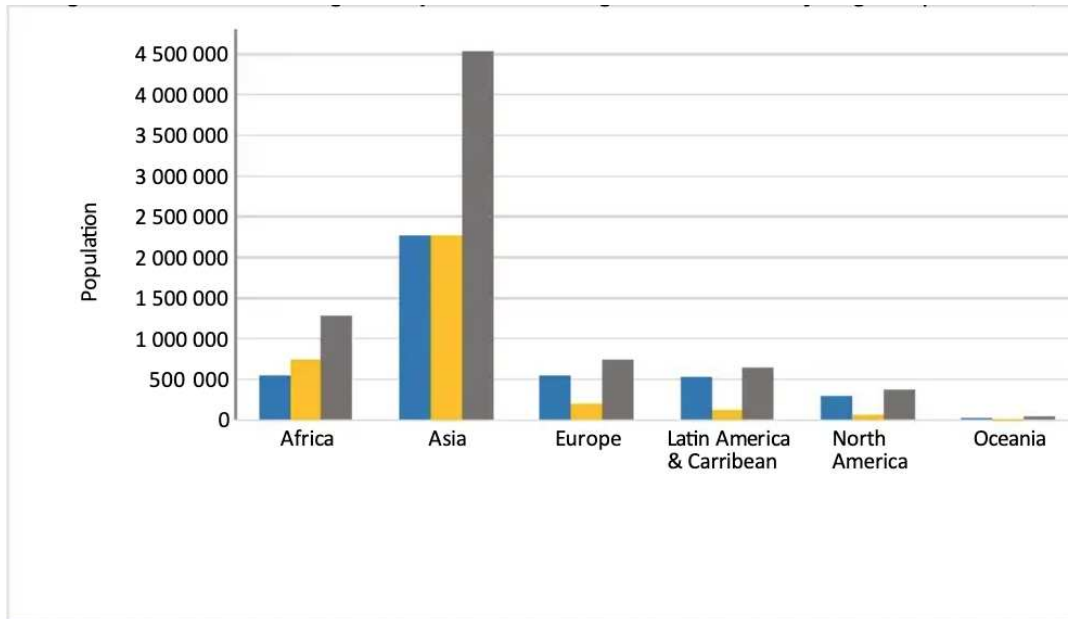


Figure 3. Urban population by Regions (UN DESA, 2018a)

In terms of country income groups, middle income countries will have the highest increase of urban populations for the next decades (Figure 4). High income countries will continue to become urban at a slower pace and low-income countries will significantly increase urban population in the next three decades. In 2050, highest urban population will be seen in lower-middle-income countries (UN DESA 2018a).

As urbanization rates continuously increase worldwide, growth of cities is inevitable. Cities are the centers of infrastructures, transport, commerce, finance and education. Cities are engines of development that do not only cause demographic transitions but also transformation of productivity, employment, social standards and natural environment (Svetlana et al. 2015). In the figures released by UN DESA (2018b), there were 371 cities with 1 million inhabitants in 2000, increased to 548 cities in year 2018 and projected to reach 706 cities by year 2030. Megacities, cities with at least 10 million dwellers, are likewise increasing in num-

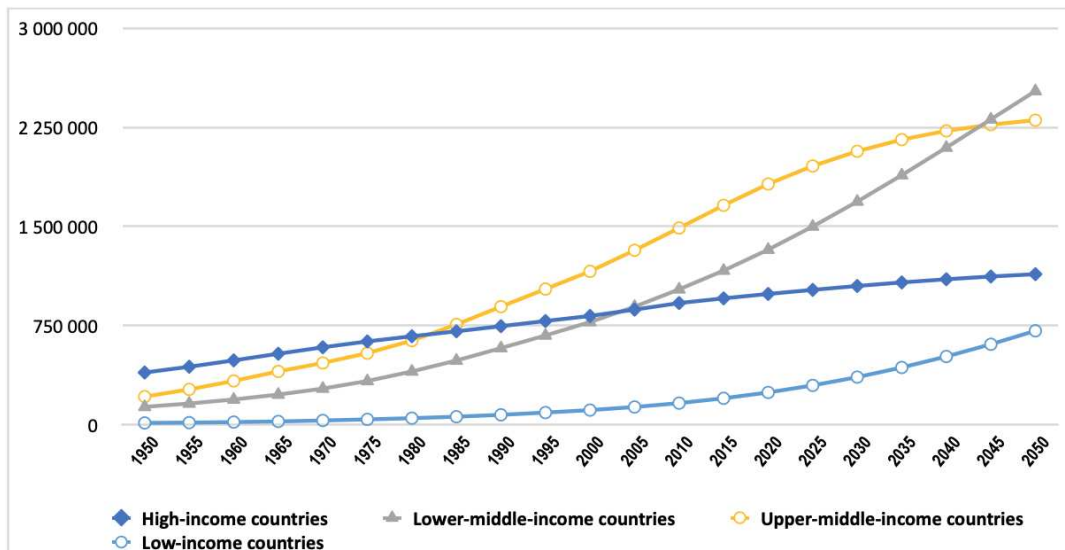


Figure 4. Urban population by income countries (UN DESA, 2018a)

ber. There are 33 megacities in 2018 and expected to have additional 10 more megacities by 2030. Most of the megacities in 2018 and 2030 are situated in Asian region. In 2018, Tokyo city topped the list with 37 million inhabitants followed by Delhi and Shanghai cities. Delhi city in India is projected to surpass Tokyo city in 2030.

Most of the cities with highest population growth rates occurs in Africa and Asia. There were 52 cities that experienced decline in population from 2000-2018 data mainly due to natural disasters and economic contraction (UN DESA, 2018b). Although most of the cities are experiencing expansion, more than 300 cities are shrinking, in that they lose 1%-10% of their population annually. Most of these cities are situated in the developed western region including the United States, Russia, and Europe (Haase, 2013). Urbanization trend may be affected by the current COVID-19 pandemic, wherein travel restrictions and quarantine measures are being imposed.

Urbanization in the Philippines

Philippines is an urbanizing nation with rapid urban population growth rate higher than the national growth rate (ADB, 2014). It was projected that more than 60% of the population will be living in urban settlements by 2050 (UN DESA, 2018a). Among the Southeast Asian countries, Philippines ranked 6th in urban population with highly urbanized Singapore topping

the list. The Philippine urbanization rate is predicted to increase by 14% in 2050 (Table 1). Due to rapid urbanization coupled with migration to urban settlements, Philippines is leading to a highly dispersed population and urban sprawl. Peri-urban areas in the Philippines will also experience development and high population growth rate (ADB, 2014).

	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
Brunei Darussalam	78.3	79.7	81.1	82.4	83.5	84.6	85.7
Cambodia	24.2	26.5	29.0	31.8	34.8	37.9	41.2
Indonesia	56.6	59.8	62.8	65.6	68.2	70.6	72.8
Lao PDR	36.3	39.6	42.9	46.2	49.4	52.6	55.7
Malaysia	77.2	79.7	81.8	83.5	85.0	86.2	87.3
Myanmar	31.1	32.8	35.0	37.6	40.6	43.8	47.1
Philippines	47.4	49.0	50.9	53.3	56.0	58.9	61.8
Singapore	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Thailand	51.4	55.0	58.4	61.6	64.4	67.0	69.5
Timor-Leste	31.3	33.2	35.2	37.3	39.4	41.6	43.7
Viet Nam	37.3	40.9	44.5	47.9	51.2	54.3	57.3
South-Eastern Asia	50.0	52.8	55.6	58.3	61.0	63.5	66.0

Table 1. Annual Percentage of Population Residing in Urban Areas in Southeast Asian Region (UN DESA 2018a)

Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority, PSA (2019a), revealed that 51.2% of the Filipino population are residing in urban areas in 2015 from 45.3% in 2010. The number of urban barangays, the smallest administrative category, increased from 5,697 in 2010 to 7,437 in 2015. Highest percentage of urban population belongs to the National Capital Region or NCR with 100% figure in years 2010 and 2015. NCR has an urban population of 12.9 million in 2015. Regions 4A and XI have high percentages of urban population with 66.4% and 63.5%, respectively. Ilocos Region is the most rural Philippine region with 20.5% followed by Administrative Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and Bicol regions both with 23.3% urban percentages. The Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) has the lowest urban population of 524,672 among the 17 Philippine regions (Table 2).

Although the Philippine population is predominantly urban, majority of the regions in the country still have lower than 50 urban population percentages. This situation caused very high population densities in urban areas than in rural regions. The Philippine population density rose from 255 persons per square kilometer in 2000 to 337 individuals per square kilometer in

2015. The National Capital Region is the densest region of the country with 20,785 persons per square kilometer which is 60 times higher the national data. Among the cities in NCR, City of Manila is the densest with 71,263 people/square kilometer followed by Mandaluyong and Pasay cities (PSA, 2019b). This urbanization characteristics of the Philippine population cause regional inequalities and urban disparity that need to be addressed.

Region and Province/Highly Urbanized City	Total Population		Urban Population		Percentage of Urban Population	
	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015	2010
PHILIPPINES	100,979,303	92,335,113	51,728,697	41,855,571	51.2	45.3
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION	12,877,253	11,855,975	12,877,253	11,855,975	100.0	100.0
CORDILLERA ADMIN REGION	1,722,006	1,616,867	524,672	424,771	30.5	26.3
REGION I - ILOCOS	5,026,128	4,748,372	1,029,562	600,945	20.5	12.7
REGION II - CAGAYAN VALLEY	3,451,410	3,229,163	663,695	373,407	19.2	11.6
REGION III - CENTRAL LUZON	11,218,177	10,137,737	6,914,703	5,232,569	61.6	51.6
REGION IV-A – CALABARZON	14,414,774	12,609,803	9,564,515	7,526,882	66.4	59.7
MIMAROPA REGION	2,963,360	2,744,671	905,666	612,615	30.6	22.3
REGION V - BICOL	5,796,989	5,420,411	1,344,903	831,380	23.2	15.3
REGION VI - WESTERN VISAYAS	7,536,383	7,102,438	2,868,795	2,466,109	38.1	34.7
REGION VII - CENTRAL VISAYAS	7,396,898	6,800,180	3,656,628	2,969,340	49.4	43.7
REGION VIII - EASTERN VISAYAS	4,440,150	4,101,322	529,902	358,405	11.9	8.7
REGION IX - ZAMBOANGA PENINSULA	3,629,783	3,407,353	1,373,274	1,156,754	37.8	33.9
REGION X – NORTHERN MINDANAO	4,689,302	4,297,323	2,272,001	1,773,032	48.5	41.3
REGION XI - DAVAO	4,893,318	4,468,563	3,108,872	2,649,039	63.5	59.3
REGION XII - SOCCSKSARGEN	4,545,276	4,109,571	2,346,149	1,911,253	51.6	46.5
REGION XIII – CARAGA	2,596,709	2,429,224	869,195	666,849	33.5	27.5
ARMM	3,781,387	3,256,140	878,912	446,246	23.2	13.7

Table 2. Total Urban Population and Percentage of Urban Population of Philippine regions (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019)

The Philippines Urbanization Review by World Bank (2017) outlined some areas for sustainable management of urban regions in the country. According to this report, reforms must be done on the urban density management, land use planning and infrastructure development with inclusion of efficient and affordable mass transportation within cities. Job creation, local

economic development and creating opportunities for the urban poor should be enhanced to create urban growth and competitiveness. Building up institutions and governance and will help in the efficient delivery of social services and improving land management will address land tenure concerns.

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