

PART III

Urbanization and Change of Life Style

Chapter 6

Urbanization and Changes in Life Pattern in Asian Nations

Reeitsu Kojima

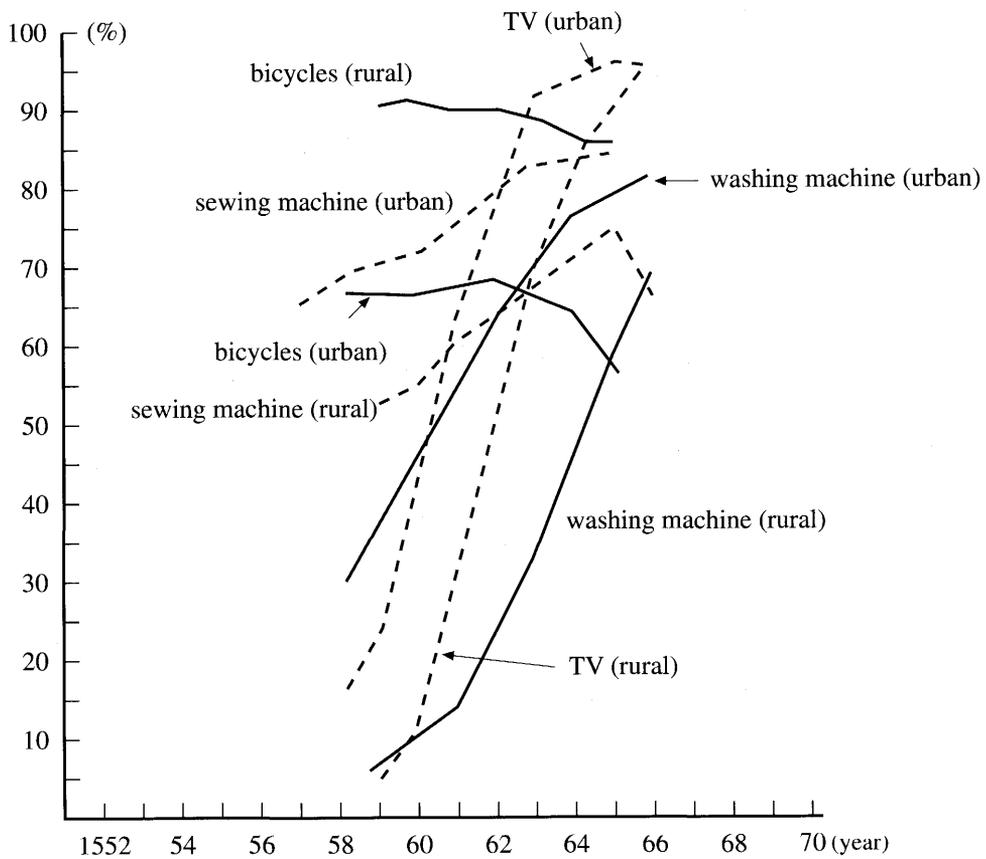
Introduction

Asian countries, except for West Asia, have grown very rapidly since the 1980s. East Asian economies (excepting Japan) have grown at the annual rate of 8–10 per cent, the ASEAN countries at 6–8 per cent, and South Asian countries at 5–7 per cent, an admirable achievement in comparison with those in Latin America and Africa. This rapid economic growth has prompted rapid urbanization, burdening urban economies with new challenges. This paper attempts to summarize both the positive and negative impacts of such rapid urbanization.

Prevalence of the American-Style High Material Civilization

One could list a number of factors that have enabled Asian economies to grow so rapidly, but one common characteristic observable in all high-growth countries is the prevalence of the American-style high material civilization that was formed during the 1940s and the 1950s in that country. This civilization was symbolized by various household electric appliances, TV, and owner-driven automobiles, further colored by the information revolution of the 1980s, and its essence was the trilogy of mass production, mass consumption, and mass wastage. While it raised the level of material life of most people in the societies concerned, it also produced massive amount of environmental pollutants.

The way in which this American-style high material civilization spread to Asian countries has had one rule of thumb: the more recent the permeation has been, the faster its speed. Japan had already started introducing it during the latter half of the 1950s (Fig. 1). By the mid-1960s about 90 per cent of Japanese households had TV sets. Cars started to catch on in the late 1960s and saturated Japan by the end of the ensuing decade. Japan was followed by NIEs, which started to adopt the same material civilization in the latter half of the 1960s. In the 1980s these countries saw rapidly growing use of cars. The third group of Asian countries to adopt the American-type civilization was the cities in the main ASEAN countries, which



Source: Economic Planning Agency, Consumer Trends, various issues.

Fig. 1 The Diffusion Rate of Consumer Durable in Japan

plunged into the automobile age in the 1980s. Next, the same high material civilization was awash on the coastal provinces of China. In Chinese cities TV sets had achieved an above 100 per cent diffusion rate by the end of the 1980s. Even in rural China today the TV diffusion rate reaches 90 per cent (Fig. 3). Cars have not yet caught on in China partly due to the Government policy, but more and more business entities are owning cars and one must admit that middle- and large-sized Chinese cities have entered the automobile age. Next in line in adopting the high material civilization was the main cities in Southern Asia, starting to do so in the 1990s. It is estimated that the automobile age will arrive in medium and small cities in rural areas of China as well as in medium and small cities of South Asia as we enter the 21st century.

The urban population in Mainland China and South Asia combined is now about 800 million, which will hit the 1,200 million level in ten-year's time. It is this high order of humanity, and the areas of their habitation, that will experience the arrival of the American-type material civilization.

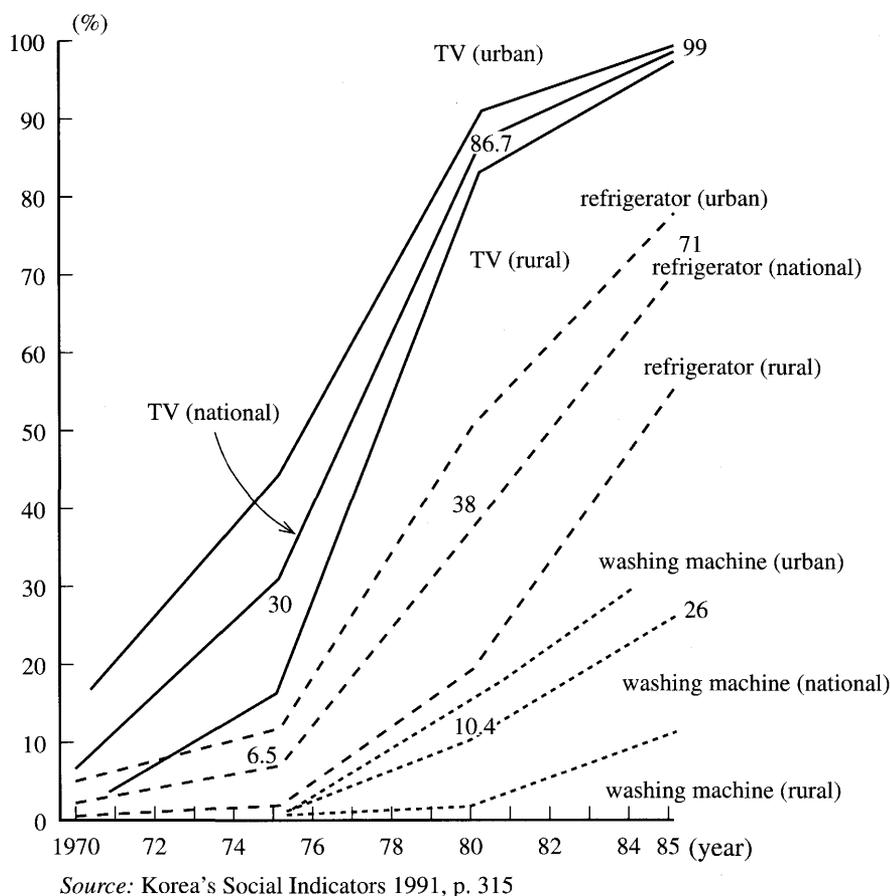


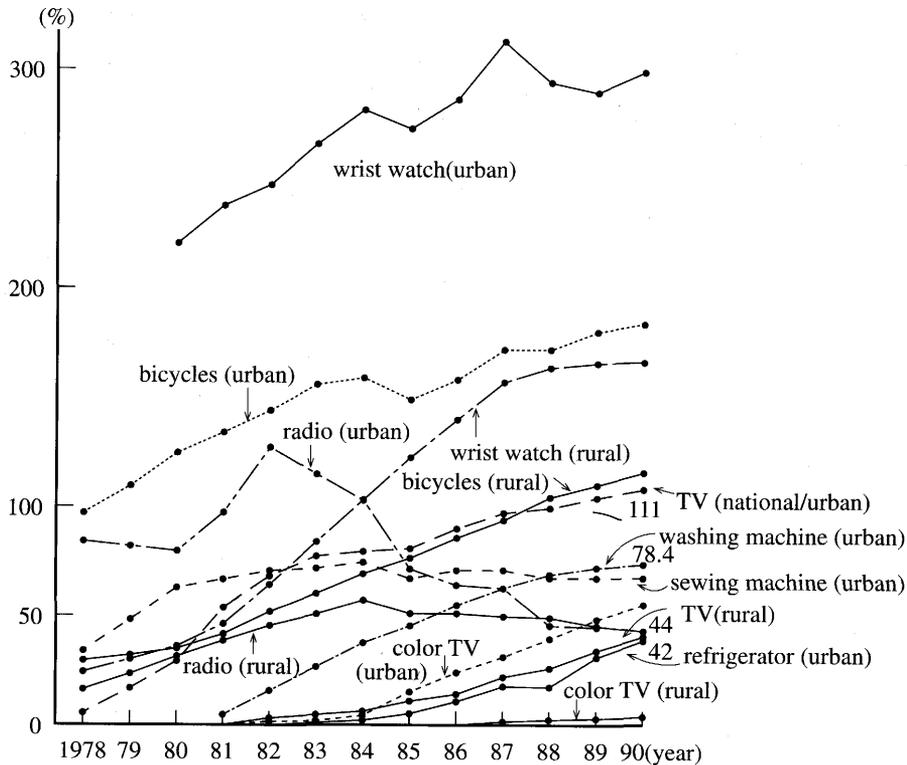
Fig. 2 The Diffusion Rate of Consumer Durable in Korea (in Households)

It took developed countries of the West as long as 30 to 50 years to see this material civilization permeate their societies, while it took Japan a far shorter period of time to do the same: only 20 to 30 years for cars to spread to over 50 per cent of its households. It is apparent that the speed of diffusion of this civilization is higher more recently, most conspicuously, state-of-the-art products of communications and information services are spreading all at once today.

The 15- to 25-year period from the latter half of the 1990s will see this high material civilization spreading to the most densely populated areas of the world: Continental China, South Asia, and Indonesia.

Rapid Urbanization Under Way

The rate of urbanization in Asian countries, except for relatively early modernizers of Japan, NIEs, and the Near East, remains low mostly at about 20 to 40 per cent.



Source: China Statistical Yearbook, various issues.

Fig. 3 The Diffusion Rate of Consumer Durable in China (per 100 Households)

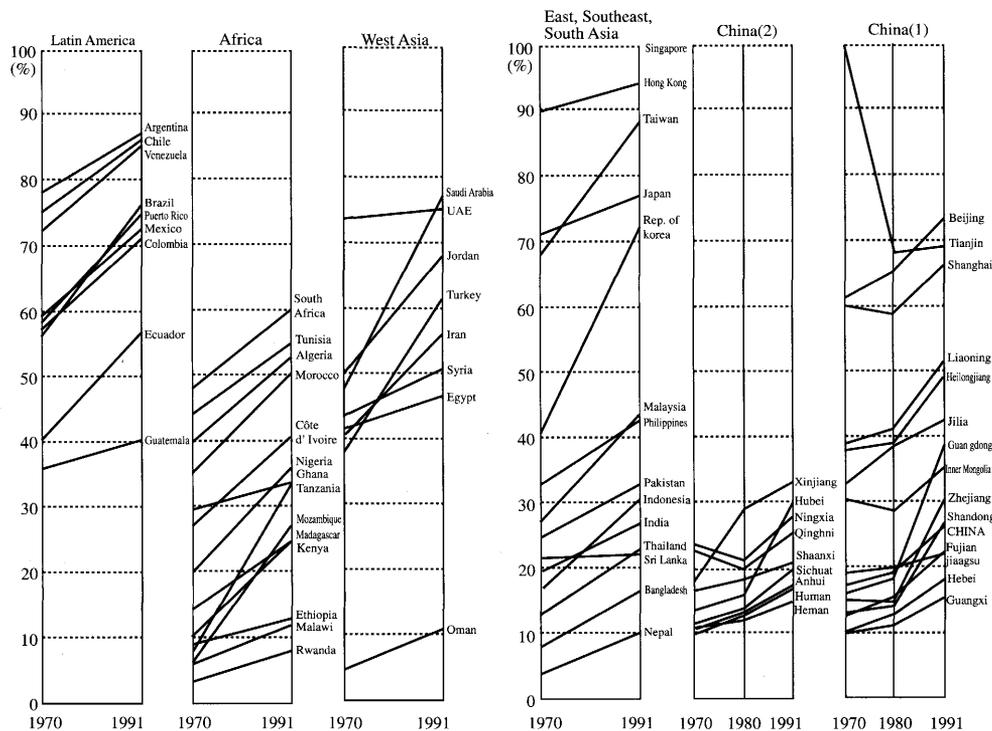
Countries with large populations such as China (Mainland), those in South Asia, and Indonesia show some of the lowest urbanization rates in the world at 30 to 35 per cent (Fig. 4)

However, rapid economic growth has been accompanied by accelerating urbanization also in Asia. Table 1 calculates the growth rate of urban population in various countries in the three periods: 1960–70, 1970–80, and 1980–92. This growth rate was declining progressively over these three periods for the developed countries of the West, Latin America, Japan, and NIEs. On the other hand, many of the developing countries (except China) have seen constantly high growth of urban population throughout the 32-year span of time.

It seems valid to apply the following criteria in examining the social impact of growing urban population.

- A: 6 per cent and over—hyper-hyper urbanization
- B: from 3 to less than 6 per cent—hyper urbanization
- C: from 1 to less than 3 per cent—rapid urbanization
- D: less than 1 per cent—stagnant urbanization

During its high growth period of 1957–73 in Japan the rate of increase of urban population was 4.3 per cent, falling in the category of hyper urbanization. The con-



Sources: For China, *Zhongguo renkou tongji nianjian* [Statistical yearbook on China's population], 1992 edition, pp.460, 464, 471-72. China's urbanization rates at the provincial level are based on the 1990 data for the population having urban registry, from *Zhongguo renkou nianjian* [Almanac of China's population], 1992 edition, p. 322. For Taiwan, *Taiwan Statistical Data Book 1992*, p. 17. As urban population figures are not available for Taiwan, estimation was made from the number of persons employed in urban areas. For others, *World Development Report, 1993*, pp. 298-99.

Fig. 4 International Comparison of Levels of Urbanization, 1970-91

fusion in Japanese cities during the 1960s was substantive. If this experience is to have any meaning at all, it would mean that those with hyper-hyper urbanization would suffer substantive worsening of the urban living environment in those countries where hyper-hyper urbanization continues over a decade.

Among the countries listed in Table 1, only China (Mainland) shows a low growth rate of urban population during the 20-year period up to 1980. This is because the Chinese government totally forbade migrating from rural to urban areas up until 1984. China restricts rural-to-urban migration even today. And yet China's urban population has been growing at 4.3 per cent since 1980. Such a high rate seems to indicate that China is emulating the general trend observable in other developing countries. The 1980s saw Chinese cities growing in their population very rapidly: at 6 per cent annually (hyper-hyper urbanization!) in four provinces, whose population put together amounts to 250 million (Fig. 5).

The experience of developed countries shows that urbanization progresses most rapidly when the urbanization rate rises from about 30 to 55 per cent. After it has hit the 55-per cent level, urbanization slows down. One could conclude from this that

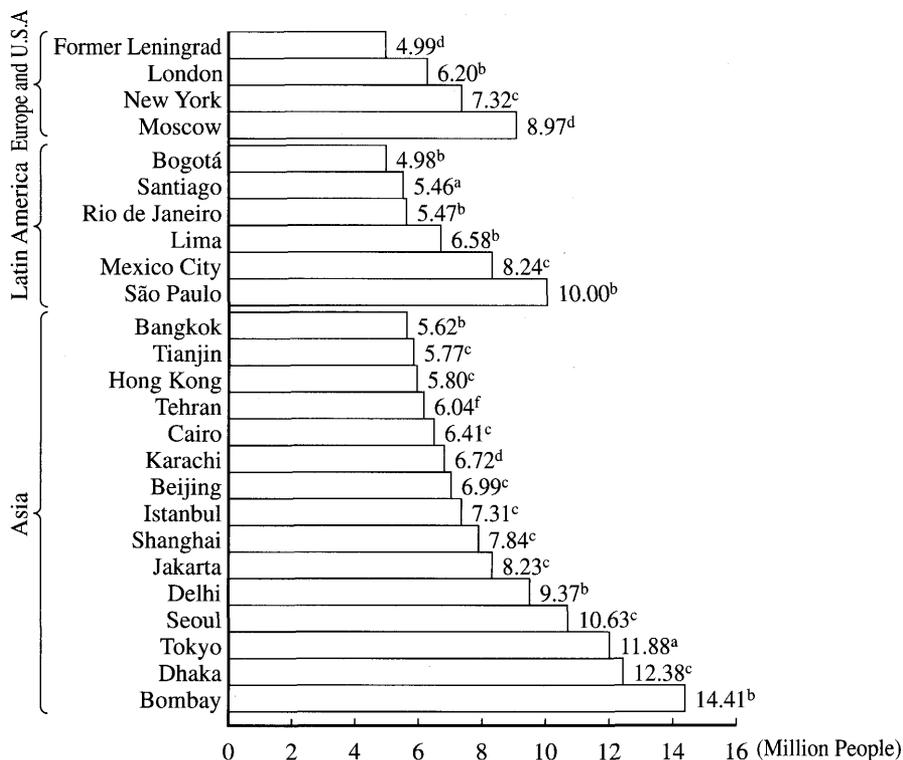
Table 1 Annual Growth Rate of Urban Population

Country	1960 -70	1970 -80	1980 -92	Country	1960 -70	1970 -80	1980 -92
Mozambique	6.5*	11.5*	9.9*	Thailand	3.6 [†]	5.3 [†]	4.5 [†]
Ethiopia	6.5*	4.8 [†]	4.8 [†]	Malaysia	3.5 [†]	5.0 [†]	4.8 [†]
Tanzania	6.3*	11.4*	6.6*	Singapore	2.3	2.0	1.7
Madagascar	5.0 [†]	5.3 [†]	5.7 [†]	China	1.0	2.7	4.3 [†]
Nigeria	4.7 [†]	6.1*	5.7 [†]	Mongolia	5.3 [†]	4.3 [†]	3.9 [†]
Uganda	7.1*	3.7 [†]	5.0 [†]	Korea, Rep.	6.5*	5.3 [†]	3.4 [†]
Guinea	4.9 [†]	4.8 [†]	5.8 [†]	Taiwan	4.8 [†]	3.6 [†]	2.3
Rwanda	5.4 [†]	7.5*	3.8 [†]	Hong Kong	4.3 [†]	2.6	1.4
Kenya	6.4*	8.5*	7.7*	Japan	2.4	1.8	0.7
Ghana	4.6 [†]	2.9	4.3 [†]	Egypt	3.5 [†]	2.5	2.5
Zambia	5.2 [†]	5.9 [†]	3.8 [†]	Yemen, Rep.	3.5 [†]	7.0*	7.3*
Morocco	4.2 [†]	4.1 [†]	3.8 [†]	Syrian Arab Rep.	4.8 [†]	4.1 [†]	4.1 [†]
Congo	5.0 [†]	3.7 [†]	4.5 [†]	Turkey	3.5 [†]	3.7 [†]	5.6 [†]
Algeria	3.5 [†]	4.1 [†]	4.9 [†]	Jordan	4.7 [†]	5.5 [†]	6.0*
South Africa	2.6	2.8	2.8	Iran, Islamic Rep.	5.3 [†]	5.0 [†]	5.0 [†]
Ecuador	4.2 [†]	4.8 [†]	4.9 [†]	Oman	6.3*	8.3*	8.2*
Peru	5.0 [†]	4.0 [†]	2.9	Saudi Arabia	8.4*	8.3*	6.5*
Colombia	5.2 [†]	3.3 [†]	2.9	United Arab Emirates	14.9*	0.9	0.4
Chile	3.1 [†]	2.4	2.1	Poland	1.8	2.0	1.3
Mexico	4.7 [†]	4.1 [†]	2.9	Bulgaria	3.8 [†]	2.1	0.7
Argentina	2.1	2.2	1.7	Hungary	2.1	2.0	0.9
Venezuela	5.1 [†]	5.0 [†]	3.4 [†]	Romania	3.4 [†]	2.6	1.2
Brazil	5.0 [†]	4.1 [†]	3.3 [†]	Spain	2.6	2.0	1.1
Uruguay	1.3	0.7	1.0	United Kingdom	0.9	0.1	0.3
Bangladesh	6.2*	6.8*	6.2*	Italy	1.5	0.9	0.6
Nepal	4.2 [†]	8.0*	7.9*	France	2.4	0.9	0.4
India	3.3 [†]	3.9 [†]	3.1 [†]	Germany	1.4	0.3	0.5
Pakistan	4.0 [†]	4.4 [†]	4.5 [†]	Norway	3.5 [†]	1.3	1.0
Sri Lanka	4.3 [†]	1.5	1.5	Switzerland	2.2	0.4	1.5
Philippines	3.8 [†]	3.8 [†]	3.8 [†]	United States	1.8	1.0	1.2
Indonesia	3.6 [†]	5.1 [†]	5.1 [†]	Australia	2.5	1.6	1.5
Myanmar	3.9 [†]	2.8	2.6				
Vietnam	5.3 [†]						

Sources: World Bank, World Development Report, 1984 ed., pp. 254-55, and 1994 ed., pp. 222-23. For Taiwan, Taiwan Statistical Data Book, 1992, p.17. Because urban population statistics were not available for Taiwan, figures for nonagricultural workers were used instead. Taiwan's figure for 1980-92 was calculated based on 1980-91 data.

* 6 per cent or higher range.

[†] 3-5 per cent range.



Sources: Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Sekai daitoshi hikaku tokeihyo: Heisei 3nen [Statistics of world large cities, 1991] (Tokyo, 1992). United Nations and Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Toshi keisei sekai [World conference on urban management] (Tokyo, 1993). China, State Statistical Bureau, Chengshi-shehui-jingji-diaocha-zongdui, ed., Zhongguo chengshi tongji nianjan, 1991 [Almanac of Chinese cities, 1991] (Beijing: Zhongguo-tongji-chubanshe, 1991).

Note: Figures for Chinese cities are of population in the city proper and surrounding suburbs; distant suburbs and provincial areas under the city's administrative jurisdiction have been excluded.

^a Figure for 1992.

^b Figure for 1991.

^c Figure for 1990.

^d Figure for 1989.

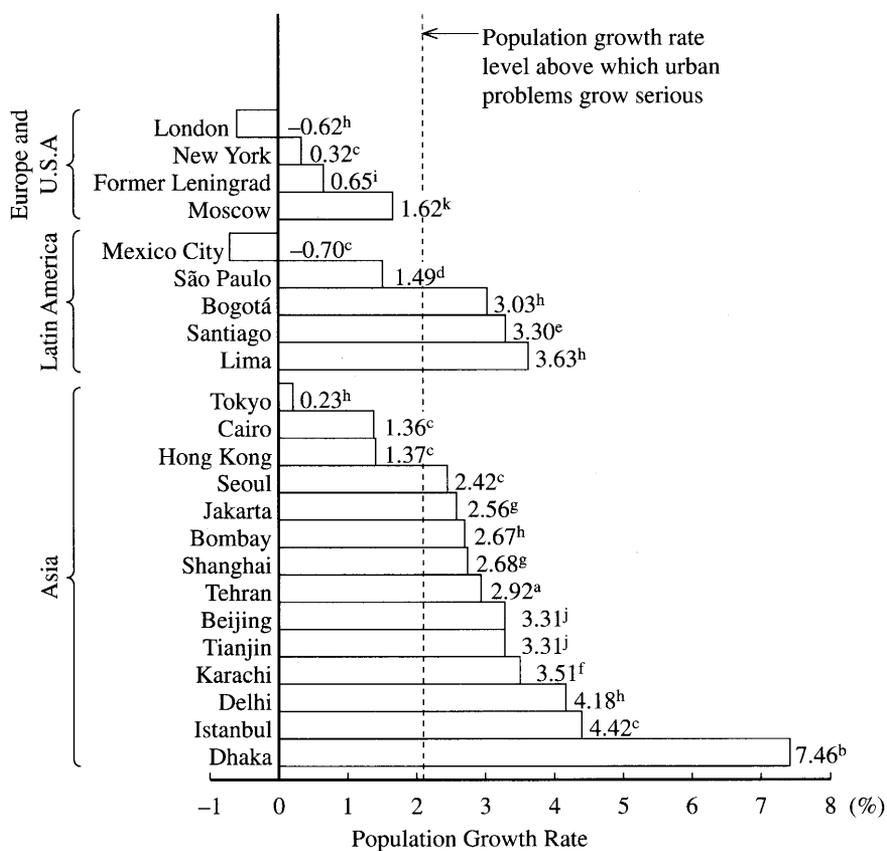
^e Figure for 1988.

^f Figure for 1986.

Fig. 6 The Giant Cities of the World around 1990 (Population 5 Million and Over)

tive concept has the population of 10,340,000. But the population of the city proper of Beijing, 6,990,000, is entered in Fig. 6. Those for Bombay and Dhaka probably cover respective administrative cities. From among the 25 cities in the world whose population goes over the 5 million level, there are as many as 15 Asian cities. There are only four such cities in the developed countries of the West.

Another important observation is the difference in the growth rate of population in these cities: in the developed countries of the West and Japan, their giant cities are growing only at the rate of below one per cent annually, while those in Asia are growing at two per cent per annum or faster (Fig. 7). The rate of increase of urban



Sources: Same as for Figure 4.

^a 1976–86. ^g 1981–90.

^b 1979–88. ^h 1981–91.

^c 1980–90. ⁱ 1984–89.

^d 1980–91. ^j 1984–90.

^e 1980–92. ^k 1985–89.

^f 1981–89.

Fig. 7 Population Growth Rate of the World's Giant Cities

population is the sum of the following three elements:

- (1) the natural rate of increase of the existing population;
- (2) the rate of increase of immigrants into the city; and
- (3) inclusion of outlying population as a result of expanding city administrative district.

The figure of 7.46 per cent for Dhaka as seen in Fig. 7 probably is mostly due to the residents of suburbs recently included in the present administrative district of that city. One conspicuous feature observable here, however, is this: while the developed countries of the West have been able to produce cities of about 7 million people, Asian economies have the potential of forming giant cities of over 10 mil-

lion people even when only the city proper is taken into account. It is difficult to forecast now if their growth will stop at 15 million or 17 million. Whether or not it will be possible to manage such giant cities in an acceptable manner is one new test the Asian countries pose for the humanity.

For countries with small populations it is meaningless to consider cities with 5 million people or more. It seems more appropriate to say, as applying to small countries, that giant cities are considered to have been formed if over 10 per cent of the population reside in their metropolis. Only five Asian countries (excluding the Near East) meet this criterion, while there are more such countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America.

Conclusion

It has often been said that urbanization in Asian countries during the 1960s was the urbanization without industrialization in view of the experience in developed countries. However, this statement does not apply to the 1980s and afterwards because it really has been the rapid urbanization accompanied by high growth and industrialization. When accompanied by industrialization, urbanization is more manageable. But the type of industrialization and economic development in today's Asia is achieved through the diffusion of the American-type high material civilization. As has been discussed in the beginning, this civilization is enshrined in the trilogy of mass production, mass consumption, and mass wastage. This imposes far heavier burden on Asian cities in terms of environmental protection than the cases of developed countries of the West. Unless urban infrastructure and environmental protection are in place to an adequate degree, there is little prospect of seeing bright future for Asian cities in 15 to 25 years' time. One should pay keenest attention to the speed of urbanization and that of the diffusion of the high material civilization particularly in such populous counties as China (Mainland), those in South Asia, and Indonesia.