**Dominance and dependence**

**Urban hierarchy**

Cities and settlements more generally, differ in their level of importance. Some cities are very large and are the command and control centres of an entire country or region, while other settlements may be very small with only a few businesses and a small number of residents. Some people actually choose to live in isolated areas. The easiest way to judge where a city is placed in the urban hierarchy is to use its population size, however we know that population size alone does tell us how important a city it. Mexico City for example, has a very large population, but does not exert much control globally. It is better to use characteristics such as GDP, the number of TNC headquarters, international importance, etc. IF we use these types of characteristics, London, New York and Tokyo are the top three command centres of the global economy. Below these cities are other world cities also known as secondary financial centres such as Hong Kong, Zurich, and Paris (as well as many others). Below these at a national level are large and small towns, villages, hamlets and lastly isolated dwellings. The urban hierarchy shows us the relationships between the different types of settlements, and it is from these relationships that we can understand the concepts of dominance and dependence.

**Dominance and dependence**

Dominance refers to the control that some urban places exert over other urban places and the extent to which that control is exerted spatially.

Dependence refers to the way in which less powerful centres become reliant upon world cities for investment, employment, infrastructure, decision-making, etc.

**The dominance of world cities**

- A few multi-functional cities dominate nationally and globally

- Dominance has emerged as a result of increasing concentration of finance, insurance and banking companies in cities, along with the centralisation of political and administrative decisions.

- World centres are dependent on small centres for primary production.

**Dominance and the urban hierarchy**

Dominance refers to the amount of control some urban places exert over other urban places and the spatial extent of that control. Within the global hierarchy, world cities have more control over all other urban places and over a greater area. They have a long history of dominance, gained through exploration and trade, colonisation and neo-colonisation and through globalisation, based on industry and services. There is a hierarchy of dominance and world cities are at the top of the pyramid. Below world cities, each level dominates the one below, from zonal cities through to regional centres and to towns and villages. Dominance is concentrated in the developed world.

**Dominance - world cities**

World cities dominate because of the concentration of control they have over a range of human activities. They are the most important centres of corporate decision making and the creation of investment capital. They attract talent and expertise that generate new ideas and technologies. They create fashion and culture. They are centres of global transport and communications. Some of this control is delegated to large cities lower down the hierarchy where branches and regional headquarters are located.

World cities receive preferential treatment from national governments. Decision-makers find it easier to allocate resources to existing capitals rather than identify opportunities elsewhere, and perceive that there is less risk associated with investing in world cities than in smaller cities and towns.

Capital cities continue to dominate the European urban systems in terms of population, employment and output – with the exceptions of Germany and Switzerland. This occurs for a number of reasons such as historical, economic, political and institutional reasons. Second tier cities continue to make a significant contribution to their national economies and the European economy. However, there is a significant gap between a nation’s world city and the second tier cities. In most of the Eastern European countries this gap is growing, but in some countries the gap it is declining. Governments will need to create strategies which encourage investment in specific areas to target second tier cities. World Cities dominate the rest of the urban system so the national economy becomes spatially and structurally unbalanced, focusing solely on the world city. Most countries do not have policies and strategies in place to develop second tier cities, so the needs of these cities are overlooked. Peripheral areas become weaker as world cities attract the concentration of investment.

**Dominance - second tier cities**

Second tier cities are cities that are secondary to world cities on the urban hierarchy of urban centres. They generally have between 500,000 to 3 million inhabitants. They generally don’t have an international profile and are only known within their own country. Second tier cities contain many of the characteristics of world cities such as concentrations of economic activity, financial services, cultural centres, etc. If they have the right infrastructure, facilities, capacity and powers second tier cities can achieve many of the functions of world cities. Second tier cities can lift the economic performance of their regions and reduce inter-regional inequalities. Second tier cities dominate their general area and draw populations and employment out from surrounding rural areas an smaller towns.

**Dependence - smaller cities/towns and regional areas**

Dependence refers to the ways in which less powerful urban centres rely upon more powerful urban centres. In contrast

to dominance, dependence is greatest at the bottom of the global urban hierarchy. The smallest urban places are least able to survive on their own, while larger urban places in the developing world are increasingly dependent on the control exerted by larger urban places in the developed world.

Less powerful urban centres increasingly depend upon the influence of the control by more powerful urban centres for:

•their material wellbeing

•the goods and services they need

•investment in employment opportunities and infrastructure

•information

•culture

•income

This relationship of dominance and dependence changes in smaller and less powerful urban centres. Transnational corporations select regional cities as strategic centres from which to extend their influence within the global economy. On a national scale, structural change has led some large cities to grow at the expense of others. Regional centres are attracting an increasingly concentrated amount of control and, as a consequence, small towns are losing human activities and control over their rural surroundings. These competing processes are constantly changing the relationship of dominance and dependence between urban centres at a variety of scales.

Sponge centres are big provincial centres which suck in people and resources from neighbouring regions.

**Record the following information:**

The Big Three

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **City** | **Population** | **GDP** |
| London |  |  |
| New York |  |  |
| Tokyo |  |  |

London compared with other European cities

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **City** | **City Population** | **Country** | **Country Population** |
| London |  |  |  |
| Paris |  |  |  |
| Munich |  |  |  |
| Berlin |  |  |  |
| Rhein-Ruhr |  |  |  |
| Belgian central metro |  |  |  |
| Milan |  |  |  |
| Rome |  |  |  |
| Barcelona |  |  |  |
| Madrid |  |  |  |

London compared with other cities in the UK

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **London** | **Population** | **GDP** |
| Brighton |  |  |
| Southhampton |  |  |
| Bristol |  |  |
| Cardiff |  |  |
| Birmingham |  |  |
| Leicester |  |  |
| Nottingham |  |  |
| Liverpool |  |  |
| Manchester |  |  |
| West Yorkshire |  |  |
| Sheffield |  |  |
| Belfast |  |  |

**How has the data you have collected from Urban World, Urban Observatory and the population density maps supported the ideas expressed in this passage?**

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