

CDE suburbanization_Guldariya_Kurbonova

First question: Who are you, and how do you engage with cities in developed/developing countries?

I am a citizen of Kazakhstan, a developing country. My answers are based on my personal experiences and perspectives, particularly regarding suburbanization in my country. These views are my own and reflect my understanding of the topic.

Additionally, I would like to ask you to select approximately 8 questions from the following list and answer each one in 3–10 sentences:

1. What do you consider typical aspects for cities in developed/developing countries? You can include personal observations.

I can compare developed and developing countries based on my personal experience. I've lived in two European developed countries, was born in Uzbekistan—a developing country—and currently live in Kazakhstan, another developing country.

In developed countries, I've noticed that the air quality is generally high. In contrast, in my city—Kazakhstan's largest and busiest—the air is polluted, primarily due to transportation. Another key difference is the transportation systems. Developed countries often have efficient and well-maintained public transportation. In developing countries, transportation in major cities like the capital may not be a significant issue. However, in smaller cities, vehicles tend to be older and less reliable. This can become particularly inconvenient during winter since many older vehicles lack proper heating systems. In rural areas of developing countries, access to transportation is even more challenging.

2. How do living conditions differ between city centers and their peripheries in developing countries? Have you lived in such conditions?

I have lived in a major city in Kazakhstan and visited suburban and rural areas, so I have observed the differences in living conditions firsthand. City centers in developing countries often provide better access to infrastructure like schools, hospitals, and markets. Public services such as transportation, water, and electricity are usually more reliable. However, city centers can also be overcrowded, with traffic congestion, noise, and air pollution being common issues.

In contrast, the peripheries offer more space and affordable housing, but they often lack basic infrastructure. Roads are sometimes poorly maintained, and access to healthcare, education, and public transportation can be limited. In some cases, even water and electricity supply is unreliable.

In Almaty's city center, I experienced the convenience of accessibility but also dealt with pollution and traffic. On the other hand, suburban areas had cleaner air but inconvenient transportation, especially in winter. These experiences have shown me the trade-offs between convenience and quality of life in different parts of the city.

3. What differences have you noticed between formal and informal housing?

In Kazakhstan, formal housing is planned and approved by authorities, offering reliable access to infrastructure such as roads, water, electricity, and sanitation. It is legally recognized, providing residents with stability and security. Informal housing, on the other hand, often arises in rural areas when agricultural lands are sold by regional authorities for settlements. These homes are built without official approval, creating challenges in legalizing and formalizing them.

By the way, we do not have slums in Kazakhstan—at least, I have not seen such cases. Informal housing here is not characterized by extreme poverty or overcrowding but rather by the lack of official approval and infrastructure in rural settlements.

Residents of informal housing often face difficulties in obtaining legal recognition, which can take years to resolve. However, these settlements are more affordable, making them an attractive option for lower-income families.

4. Have you experienced the impacts of insufficient infrastructure on residents' health?

I personally have not experienced the impacts of insufficient infrastructure on health, nor have my family members or those in my circle. In Kazakhstan, there is a sufficient number of hospitals and clinics in cities and villages, and they are generally accessible to people. However, the main issue is not the availability of healthcare facilities but the shortage of specialized medical professionals. While basic medical services are provided, more complex illnesses may remain untreated due to the lack of expertise in specific fields. This creates challenges for patients who require advanced or specialized care, often forcing them to travel to larger cities or even abroad for treatment.

5. What cultural factors influence residents' preferences when choosing housing?

Neighborhood. In Kazakhstan, for example, we tend to pay close attention to the neighbors when choosing where to live. This preference is deeply rooted in our culture, which values community and social harmony. It can be influenced by religious and cultural traditions, as people often seek to live near others who share similar values and lifestyles. Having familiar and trusted neighbors provides a sense of security and comfort.

6. Are traditions and customs reflected in urban planning?

Yes, traditions and customs are reflected in urban planning, although it may not always be directly related to tradition or custom. From my observation over the last 15 years, the architecture in Kazakhstan has changed significantly. Fifteen years ago, many houses here resembled those in Russian cities, which makes sense considering Kazakhstan was under Russian influence for 70 years. However, over the past decade, the design has become more modern, similar to cities in the USA. For example, many new modern buildings were constructed from scratch in our capital for Expo 2017.

If I compare this to Uzbekistan, cities like Bukhara and Samarkand are deeply influenced by religious and cultural traditions, with their architecture reflecting this rich history.

7. Do you know of anything that could improve the situation in overcrowded peripheries and depopulated city centers?

Yes, there are a few ways to improve the situation in overcrowded peripheries and depopulated city centers. In the overcrowded areas, improving infrastructure like public transport, healthcare, and schools can make life easier. Building more affordable and better-quality housing would also help reduce overcrowding.

For depopulated city centers, one solution is to improve public spaces and encourage businesses to move there. Making housing more affordable in these areas could also attract more people. Additionally, promoting tourism and cultural events could bring life back to the city center.

8. How do cities cope with migration and population growth? Is this a dangerous phenomenon?

One way cities can cope with migration and population growth is by planning ahead. With access to statistics, we can predict population growth and plan for future needs. I believe it is the responsibility of the government and authorities to use this data to ensure the city can support its growing population.

Migration and population growth are not a dangerous phenomenon, as people are a valuable asset to society. The key challenge is ensuring that cities have the necessary infrastructure and services to accommodate everyone in a sustainable way.

9. What drives suburbanization and the creation of such areas?

One of the main reasons is the desire for more affordable and spacious housing. As cities become more crowded and expensive, people move to the suburbs for larger homes and a quieter environment. Another factor is the improvement of transportation, which makes it easier to commute from suburban areas to city centers for work or other activities.

In Kazakhstan, suburbanization has also been influenced by rapid urban growth, especially in major cities like Almaty and Shymkent. Many people are moving to the outskirts to escape the overcrowding and high living costs of the city center. The expansion of road networks and public transportation has made it easier for people to live in the suburbs and still have access to work and services in the city.

10. What impact does suburbanization have on local culture and society?

As more people move to the suburbs, there is often a change in the social structure. Suburban areas tend to attract families looking for more space, which can lead to a more family-oriented community. In Kazakhstan, for example, this shift has resulted in a greater emphasis on private homes and gardens, which contrasts with the apartment living common

in city centers. This change in housing can influence daily routines, as people in suburban areas may spend more time at home or commuting to the city.

11. Do you know of any successful projects aimed at improving housing in city centers and their peripheries in developed/developing countries?

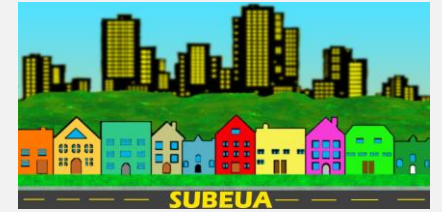
12. What role do technology and innovation play in addressing problems related to suburbanization? How can new technologies contribute to sustainable urban development?

You name it—there are countless technologies we can benefit from! Some of them could be **Data-Driven Urban Planning:**

- **Geospatial and Satellite Technologies:** Help monitor land use changes, urban expansion patterns, and environmental impacts of suburbanization.
- **AI and Machine Learning:** Analyze large datasets to predict suburban growth and guide zoning decisions.
- **Digital Twins:** Virtual replicas of urban areas allow planners to simulate and optimize suburban development projects.



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