

Glossary

Absorption

The disappearance of a local unit or agglomeration through its combination with another local unit or agglomeration.

Accessibility

The likelihood that an inhabitant will move to an agglomeration.

Agglomeration

A geographic milieu defined by the continuity of the built environment and/or demographic density. In some definitions, these two criteria can be associated or not. In Africapolis, an agglomeration is any urbanised settlement of at least 10 000 inhabitants in a continuous built-up area with less than 200 metres between buildings and constructions.

Attractor

There are three kinds of localised, geometric settlement structures: grouped settlement, linear settlement, and dispersed settlement. At the local level, these structures have a fundamental impact on urbanisation. These three elementary geometric forms — point, line, and surface — allow for a formal categorisation of the patterns that guide spatial agglomeration growth (size, density, and hierarchical form of agglomerations).

Bicephalic

Two-headed. Characteristics of a national urban system dominated by two large agglomerations.

City

In Africapolis, a territorial unit with a political or administrative status legally used by national statistics to define the “urban” population of a country. This notion should not be confused with agglomeration, which is purely morphological.

Conurbation

An agglomeration that has more than one functional centre.

Demographic pressure

Pressure exerted by a strong increase of the population on a given territory. With equal population growth, the smaller the territory, the greater the pressure per unit area.

Dispersed settlement

A form of settlement characterised by large distances between habitations.

Endogenously regulated

Designates a spatial trajectory that is governed by its own actors (self-regulated). For example, an urbanisation process that results from self-regulated trajectories is characterised by grouping.

Exogenously-regulated

Describes a spatial trajectory that is influenced by external actors or phenomena (for example, a refugee camp).

Functional (Functional approach)

This approach is based on the function of an agglomeration. This function is defined by the presence of political decision-making centres (chief administrative division). The notion is extended to commercial (market) and employment (industrial, commercial, administrative) functions. The functional approach is based on the centre-periphery movements of people (usually home-to-work commuting), tangible and intangible goods, and sometimes the density of networks.

Grouped settlement

Form of settlement characterised by minimising the distance between neighbours.

Interpolation/Retropolation

Interpolation is a mathematical operation that makes it possible to construct a curve from the data of a finite number of points, or a function from the data of a finite number of values. Retropolation refers to prolonging the curve into the past, and projection, towards the future.

Linear settlement

A form of settlement characterised by the distribution of population along linear attractors (roads, ridges, coastlines, etc.).

Local unit (LU)

For Africapolis, the smallest division of administrative territories in a state.

Locality

A locality is a geographically determined space.

Macrocephalic

“With a head disproportionate to the rest of the body”. Character of a national urban system whose population of a big city or some big cities dominates other agglomerations.

Monocephalic

Single-headed. Characteristic of a national urban system in which one large agglomeration dominates.

Megacity

A very large city or agglomeration, usually with more than 10 million inhabitants.

Megalopolis

A very large urban area with a large number of agglomerations close to each other.

Merger

The combination of urban units into one.

Metadata

Information on given data.

Metropolis, metropolitan agglomeration

Agglomeration whose population is relatively high compared to the national urban system to which it belongs, distinguishing it from secondary cities. The vast majority of states have only one metropolitan agglomeration, but some countries have two.

Metropolised region (Metropolitan area)

Area that includes a set of urban or rural localities strongly connected to the core of the morphological agglomeration. The territory concerned is defined by the intensity of flows polarised by the centre of a large city.

Naturality

A characteristic derived from nature rather than human factors.

Nucleated (grouped) populations

A form of settlement characterised by a minimisation of distance between habitations.

Orography

Study of the topographic reliefs of mountains.

Planned area

Limits of a territory laid out according to a scheme or plan as planned by a public actor (municipality, state).

Population density

Number of inhabitants per square kilometre.

Population stratum

All human settlements belonging to the same scale in a territory: “metropolitan” stratum (political or economic centre), “urban” stratum, “rural” stratum, etc.

Polycentric

The characteristic of a national system dominated by several large agglomerations.

Primacy (index of)

Indicator calculated by dividing the population of the largest agglomeration by that of the second-largest agglomeration to measure the importance of the first city of a country compared to others within the same urban system (a country in general). By extension, one can calculate the relationship between agglomerations. These results are designated as Prim 1, Prim2, Prim3, etc.

Rural

Category of space or population living outside urban agglomerations. “Rural” should not be confused with “agricultural”.

Scalar

Pertaining to spatial scale.

Settlement system

Human settlements in a territory.

Spatialisation

Localisation in space.

Toponym

Name of a place.

Urban

What belongs to the “urbis”, that is, from inside the ramparts. Refers to the dense agglomerate part of a town or village.

Urban scattering

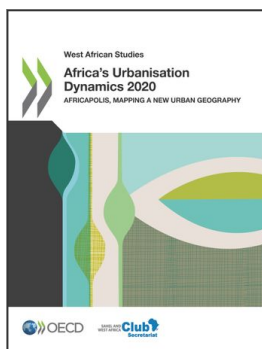
Rural countryside with a scattering of buildings/ construction.

Urban sprawl

The expansion of an urban built environment to the detriment of undeveloped spaces.

Urbanity

Perceived or expected character of what is urban.



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