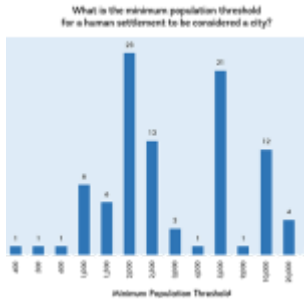


Chandan Deuskar ~ What Does “Urban” Mean?



Anyone reading this is likely to have heard the statistic that ‘over half of the world’s population now lives in urban areas’. This has been the standard opening line of reports and presentations about urbanization since this milestone was supposedly reached in 2008. But what does it really mean?

In everyday usage, terms related to human settlements have vague, shifting meanings. What one person might describe as a small ‘city’ might be a ‘town’ or ‘village’ for someone else; one person’s ‘megacity’ might be a cluster of cities from a different perspective.

Similarly, we can usually identify areas that are clearly within a city and others that are outside it, but there is usually a peri-urban area of intermediate density that usually lies between the two, making it hard to define a clear city limit. Formal administrative boundaries may have historic or political meaning, but are rarely aligned with the physical or economic extents of the urban area.

Read more: <http://blogs.worldbank.org/what-does-urban-mean>