

Assignment 1

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"I pledge my honor that I have abided by the Stevens Honor System."

Question 1.

A city that stood out in my mind while reading chapter 1 was Dubai, for its many recent urban achievements and its explosive rate of growth. Prior to 1966 when oil was first discovered in the region, the main industry in Dubai was fishing. Following the discovery of oil, however, the economic characteristics of Dubai shifted, and now the residents are mostly working in diverse and well-paying industries like energy, finance, and technology. Its functional nature is incredible, touting some of the most extravagant infrastructure, including the world's tallest building, the Burj Khalifa. Finally, its population density has skyrocketed since 1966 - when there were below 50,000 people in the metro area – to over 2.5 million today.

Their expansive economic growth can also be attributed to their openness to tourists and foreign investors. Many businesses and multinational corporations have moved operations to the city to take advantage of their generous tax-free nature. Even during the 2008 financial crisis caused by the failure of markets in the United States, which drastically affected the price of oil, Dubai was able to adapt and overcome by investing money into becoming a large producer of renewable energy as well. Despite their relatively small population numbers compared to megacities like Tokyo and New York, Dubai has managed to become a leading power in GDP and relative clout thanks to its unrivaled economic growth, incredible tourist attractions, and ability to lure in successful business and the ultra-rich.

Question 2.

As cities tend more and more towards being global in reach, many good things will occur. Urban areas will act even more as interconnected hubs for financial markets and free trade of goods, creating opportunities for investment and economic growth. Suburban and rural areas surrounding urban areas which experience a resource crisis can benefit from the importing of goods from other countries to the urban areas for easy transport to their storefronts and factories, mitigating some of the challenges of a changing climate and ecosystem. People from outside of the cities may find new jobs within them, bringing economic growth to their surrounding areas. The immense cultural diversity within these cities, as they open themselves more to tourism and immigration, can bring different food, art, and traditions to areas which would otherwise never experience them, and inter-ethnic relations will create new ideas and subcultures from this exchange, enriching the lives of its citizens.

Unfortunately, all of these benefits tend to come at a great cost. As economic opportunity increases in these cities, the gained income tends to enter the hands of those who are already well off, widening the already massive gap in income, and furthering economic inequality and generational poverty. As populations rise, overcrowding will strain housing markets and resources within the cities, causing more homelessness by driving up housing rates. Overcrowding also inevitably leads to more violent

crime. The huge competition in the job market that comes with population growth also tends to leave even those who are gainfully employed feeling stressed, overworked, and underappreciated. Although cultural melding has the ability to create beautiful art and new traditions, it can also cause a loss of cultural and national identity for those who move to new countries seeking opportunity in the urban areas. Lastly, the environmental impact of cramming so many people into a particular area cannot be ignored.