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Comparing Beijing's and Tokyo's Population Growths

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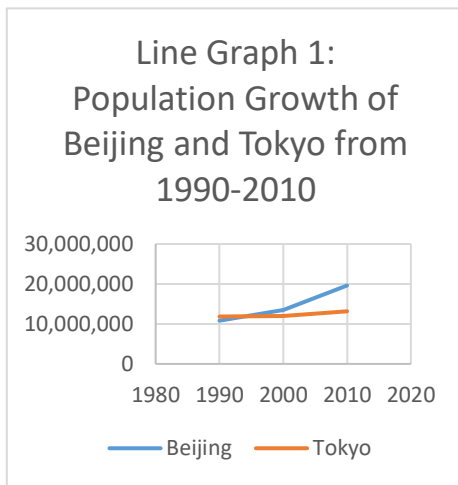
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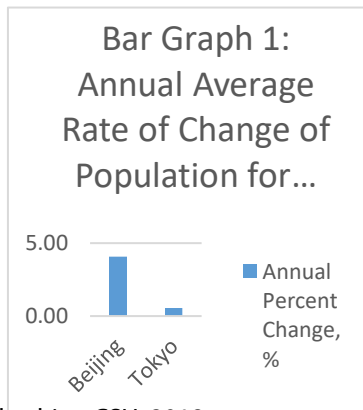
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The growth of the human population has led to the formation of largely populated agglomerations known as megacities. Although megacities can be found on multiple continents, Asia's collection displays how megacities can develop in their own directions. Japan's megacity of Tokyo, like other Japanese megacities, has adopted a western approach. China's Beijing, on the other hand, continues to embrace its eastern roots. These megacities may differ in their ideologies, but they share in experiencing similar phenomena. This paper will investigate the incidence of similar issues in structurally different megacities and how those megacities strive to address them.



Line Graph 1's Table	1990	2000	2010
Beijing	10,819,414	13,569,194	19,612,368
Tokyo	11,855,563	12,064,101	13,159,388

Line Graph 1 and Bar Graph 1, along with their accompanying data tables, provide some basic statistical analysis of the population growth of Tokyo and Beijing. When looking at the line graph and accompanying chart, the populations of the two megacities can be seen to be quite similar. It should also be noted that Beijing, despite having a smaller population than Tokyo in 1990, recorded larger populations than Tokyo did in both 2000 and 2010. Furthermore, Bar Graph 1 provides insight into the annual percent rate of change for both cities based on the data in Line Graph 1. The resulting comparison finds Beijing's percent change of 4.06% to be appreciably larger than Tokyo's percent change of 0.55%. This means that Beijing is growing at a much faster rate than Tokyo and also that Beijing's population is larger than Tokyo's.



When looking at Tokyo’s growth as a megacity, the relationship between rural decline and urban growth must be discussed. Japan truly adopted the western template for capitalism after its loss in WWII. As Tokyo and other Japanese prefectures began incorporating free market principles into their economies and led to the nation becoming export-driven, a necessity for urban environments in which business and telecommunications could be centered in arose (Wikipedia, 2016). Hence, urban sprawl and internal migration from rural areas to urban cities and megacities erupted. Between 1972 and 2011, Tokyo saw waves after waves of Japanese citizens abandoning the agrarian lifestyle in exchange for the promises of capitalism. This migration happened at such a high rate that “the urban growth rate exceeded the population growth rate by a factor of 2.6” (Bagan & Yamagata, 2012).

Bar Graph 1’s Table	Annual Percent Change
Beijing	4.06
Tokyo	0.55

Although this influx of workers stimulated the economy, Tokyo continues to struggle with a myriad of issues. The destruction that the Tokyo bombings from 1944 to 1945 led to a high demand for construction and utility workers within the central city, which only exacerbated the density of the megacity. The enormity of Tokyo’s population leads to appreciable issues with transportation, leading its bussing and subway systems to be some of the busiest circuits in the world ever since the 1980s (Wikipedia, 2016). Congestion leads to safety hazards, and when considering that Tokyo rests on a seismically active plot of land, evacuation and rebuilding can be chaotic and have plagued Tokyo since the Tokyo Earthquake of 1923 that led to approximately 142,000 deaths. Wikipedia (2016) further writes that the high population count in Tokyo has led to average cost of living to skyrocket as governmental officials try to accommodate all of Tokyo’s citizens. Tokyo was the single most expensive city to live in for fourteen straight years starting in 1992. (Wikipedia, 2016).

Unlike Tokyo, Beijing has a long history of communist policies and has only recently begun accepting free market principles into its economy (Pannell, 2014). Mixing in western influences, like opening up Beijing’s market to overseas traders, has permitted the megacity to have a thriving economy and an unemployment rate of only about 1%. This promise of economic opportunity has led to the aforementioned high annual rate of change. Heavy migration into Beijing began in earnest during the 1950s. In order to fit this new surge of immigrants, vertical housing became a necessity to squeeze as many people into not only the core city, but Greater Beijing as well. Many of these condominiums

are often of a low-quality and the poorest individuals must often cope with a lack of services and sanitation (Cox, 2008). Cox (2008) also states, however, that the inner-city density of Beijing has actually dropped appreciably since the 1950s, making the overpopulation of the megacity more tolerable than before. Nonetheless, Beijing, like much of China, suffers from air pollution. A large population that emits carbon dioxide in large quantities due to exhalation and toxic fumes emitted from transportation vehicles both affect the air quality of China as a whole. Yet, it is the population growth that has the largest impact on air pollution (Zhang, Wang, Liang, Xu, Zhang, Zhao, & Bi, 2015).

Based on all this information, it is clear that population growth has had negative impacts on both of these cities. Tokyo and Beijing, despite having their own approaches towards city building and economy, have issues with the congestion of people living within their borders. For Tokyo, this manifests itself most evidently in the exorbitant cost of living and safety concerns in the case of a natural disaster like an earthquake (Wikipedia, 2016). Beijing's main concern is the high levels of energy consumption and air pollution that are primarily brought on by its rapidly growing population (Zhang et al, 2015). Regardless of what ideology drives the planning decisions of these cities, they still face similar issues due to large populations that are still growing.

Despite all of these drawbacks, Tokyo and Beijing have reaped economic benefits from their ever growing populations. Unfortunately, whether in the form of inflated costs or environmental concerns, population growth has led to lasting issues. From the information provided by Line Graph 1 and Bar Graph 1, both of these megacities have been steadily growing since at least 1990. However, when taking a look at their histories, it can be easily affirmed that this growth was already strongly occurring in the 1950s, if not earlier. The allure of financial success has led to two agglomerations filled with congested transportation, health concerns, and high costs.

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