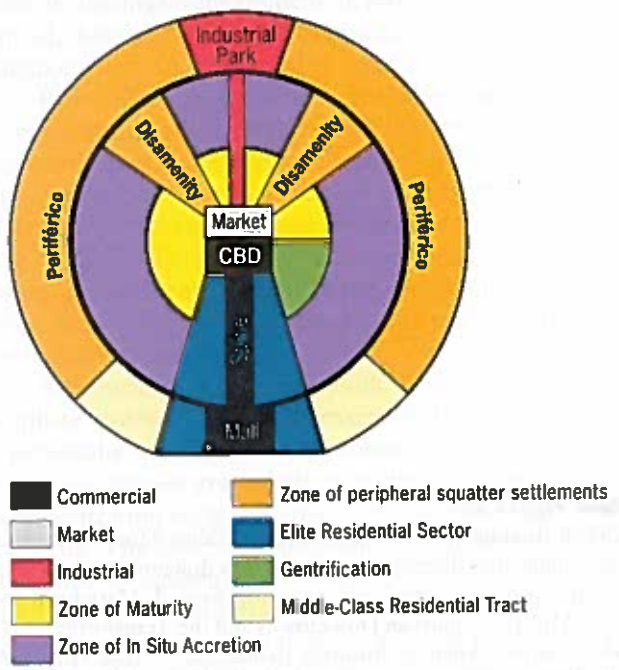

Figure 9.25
A New and Improved Model of the Latin American City Structure. This model includes both the zones created in the original Griffin-Ford model and the new Ford model of the Latin American city. *Adapted with permission from*: L. Ford, "A New and Improved Model of Latin American City Structure," *The Geographical Review* 86 (1996), p. 438.

of peripheral squatter settlements is home to the impoverished and recent migrants. Although this ring consists mainly of teeming, high-density shantytowns, residents here are surprisingly optimistic about finding work and improving their living conditions.

A structural element of many Latin American cities is the **disamenity sector**, the very poorest parts of cities that in extreme cases are not connected to regular city services and are controlled by gangs and drug lords. The disamenity sectors in Latin American cities contain relatively unchanging slums known as *barrios* or *favelas*. The worst of these poverty-stricken areas often include large numbers of people who are so poor that they are forced to live in the streets (Fig. 9.26). There is little in the way of regular law enforcement within such communities, and drug lords often run the show—or battle with other drug lords for dominance. Such conditions also prevail in places beyond the ring highway or *periférico*, which is now a feature of most South American cities.

Finally, the Griffin-Ford model displays two smaller sectors: an industrial park, reflecting the ongoing concentration of industrial activity in the city, and a gentrification zone, where historic buildings are preserved. Gentrification remains much less common in South American cities than in North America, but it is an emerging phenomenon.

To what extent is the Griffin-Ford model a realistic portrayal of the Latin American city? The model reflects the enormous differences between the spaces of privilege and the spaces of abject poverty within the Latin American city. The model also describes elements of sector development evident in many large South American cities, but the concentricity suggested by the model seems to be breaking down. Figure 9.25 incorporates both the original zones of the Griffin-Ford model and the updates Larry Ford added in a 1996 article. Larry Ford's updated Griffin-Ford model adds a ring highway (*periférico*) around the outskirts of the city, divides the downtown business district into a CBD and a market, adds a mall near the elite space, and leaves space for suburban industrial parks.

The African City

At the beginning of this century, Subsaharan Africa included countries with some of the world's lowest levels of urbanization. In the tropical region of Africa, the majority of the people are farmers, and most countries in the tropics remain under 40 percent urbanized. Outside the tropics, the region is about 57 percent urban. Despite the region's lower levels of overall urbanization than much of the rest of the world, Africa now has the world's fastest growing cities, followed by those in South Asia and mainland East Asia and South and Middle America. In contrast, the cities of North America, southern South America, and Australia are growing more slowly, and those of western Europe are barely growing at all.

The imprint of European colonialism can be seen in many African cities. During colonialism, Europeans laid out prominent urban centers such as Kinshasa (The Congo), Nairobi (Kenya), and Harare (Zimbabwe) in the interior, and Dakar (Senegal), Abidjan (Ivory Coast), Luanda (Angola), Maputo (Mozambique), and other ports along the coast. Africa even has cities that are neither traditional nor colonial. South Africa's major urban centers (Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban) are essentially Western, with elements of European as well as American models, including high-rise CBDs and sprawling suburbs.

As a result of this diversity, it is difficult to formulate a model African city. Studies of African cities indicate that the central city often consists of not one but three CBDs (Fig. 9.27): a remnant of the colonial CBD, an informal and sometimes periodic market zone, and a transitional business center where commerce is conducted from curbside, stalls, or storefronts. Vertical development occurs mainly in the former colonial CBD; the traditional business center is usually a zone of single-story buildings with some traditional architecture; and the market zone tends to be open-air, informal, yet still important. Sector development marks the encircling zone of ethnic and mixed neighborhoods (often characterized by strong ethnic identities); manufacturing or mining operations are found next to some parts of this zone. Finally, many African cities are ringed by satellite townships that are squatter settlements.

The Southeast Asian City

Some of the most populated cities in the world are in Southeast Asia. The city of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, is a complex of high-rise development, including the 1483-foot-tall Petronas Towers, which until recently was the world's tallest building. The city of Jakarta, Indonesia, called Jabotabek by the locals, is an enormous conurbation of Bogor, Tangerang, and Bekasi.

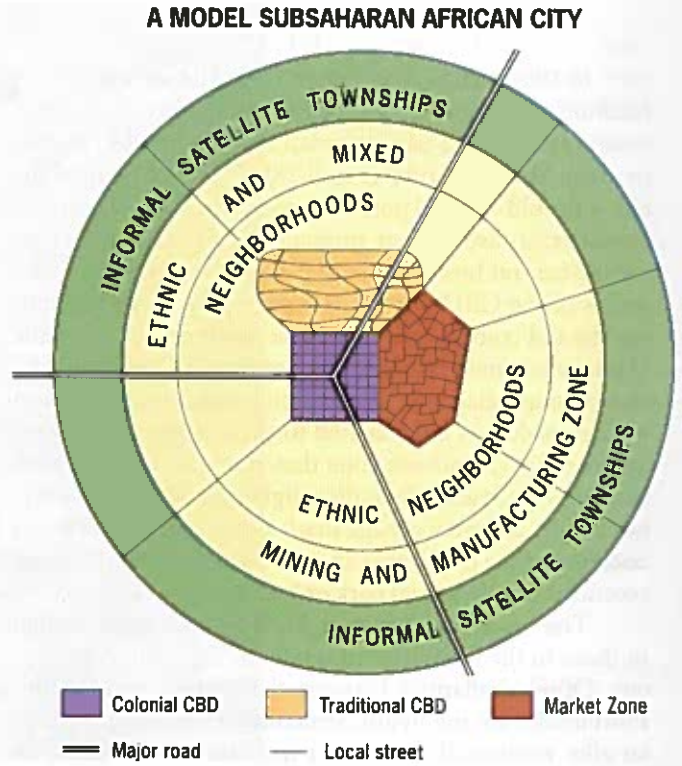

Figure 9.27
Model of the Subsaharan African City. One model of the African city includes a colonial CBD, traditional CBD, and market zone. © E. H. Fouberg, A. B. Murphy, H. J. de Blij, and John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Field Note

"February 1, 2003. A long-held hope came true today: thanks to a Brazilian intermediary I was allowed to enter and spend a day in two of Rio de Janeiro's hillslope *favelas*, an eight-hour walk through one into the other. Here live millions of the city's poor, in areas often ruled by drug lords and their gangs, with minimal or no public services, amid squalor and stench, in discomfort and danger. And yet life in the older *favelas* has become more comfortable as shacks are replaced by more permanent structures, electricity is sometimes available, water supply, however haphazard, is improved, and an informal economy brings goods and services to the residents. I stood in the doorway of a resident's single-room dwelling for this overview of an urban landscape in transition: satellite-television disks symbolize the change going on here. The often blue cisterns catch rainwater; walls are made of rough brick and roofs of corrugated iron or asbestos sheeting. No roads or automobile access, so people walk to the nearest road at the bottom of the hill. Locals told me of their hope that they will some day have legal rights to the space they occupy. During his campaign for president of Brazil, Lula de Silva suggested that long-term inhabitants should be awarded title, and in 2003 his government approved the notion. It will be complicated: as the photo shows, people live quite literally on top of one another, and mapping the chaos will not be simple (but will be made possible with geographic information systems). This would allow the government to tax residents, but it would also allow residents to obtain loans based on the value of their *favela* properties, and bring millions of Brazilians into the formal economy. The hardships I saw on this excursion were often dreadful, but you could sense the hope for and anticipation of a better future. In 2007, President de Silva's government pledged $3.6 billion to bring water, sewage, roads, and improved housing to the 20 percent of the city of Rio de Janeiro who live in the favelas."

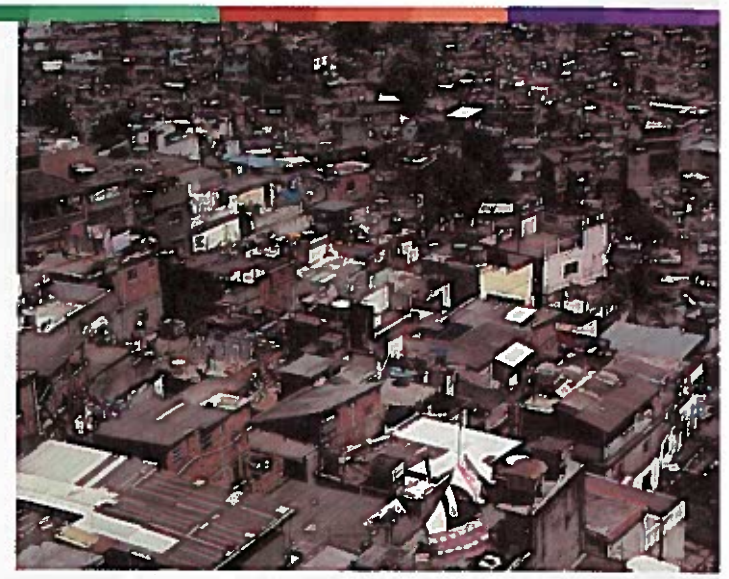

Figure 9.26
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. © H. J. de Blij.