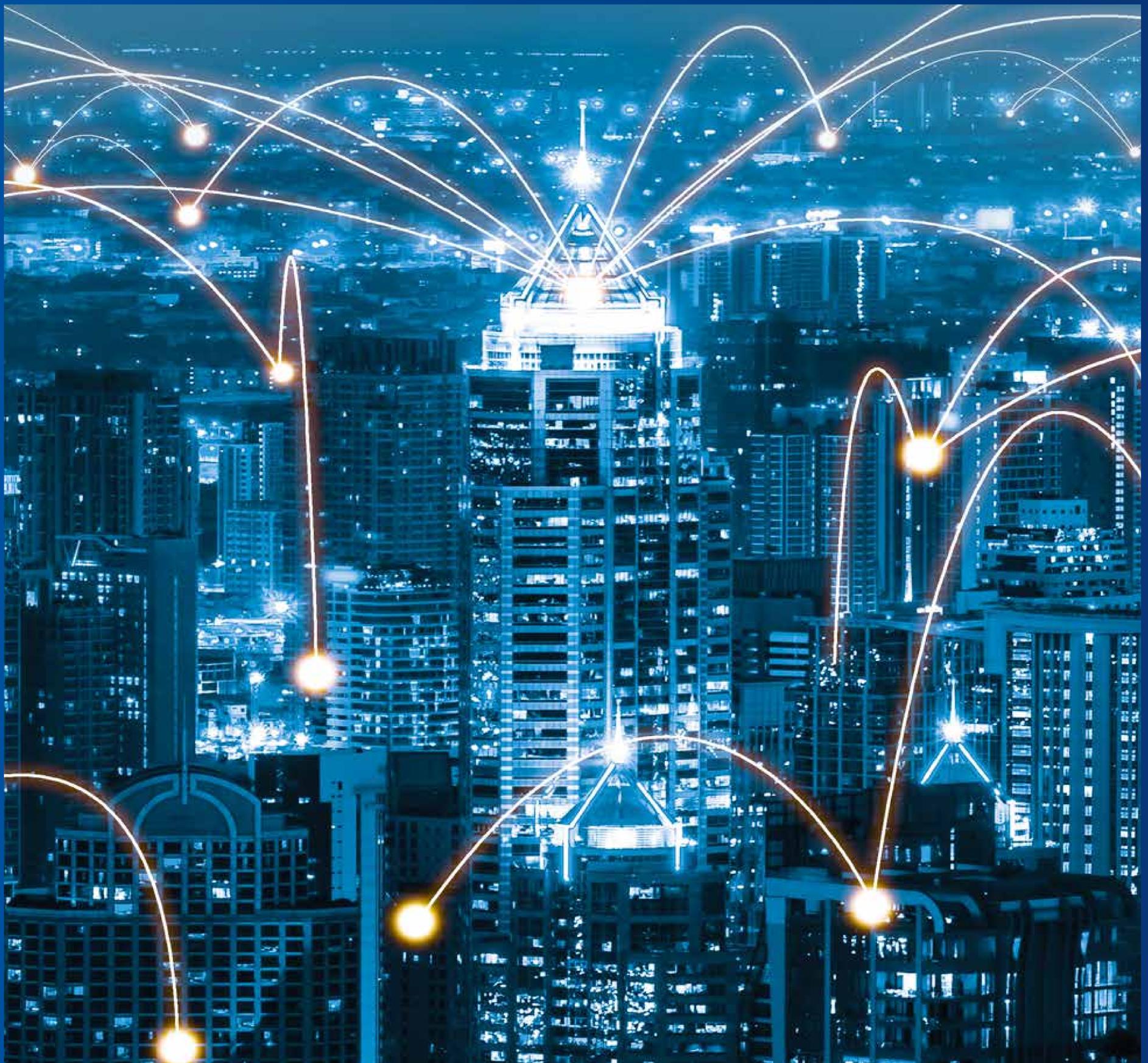


# Global Urban Competitiveness Report (2020-2021)

*Global Urban Value Chain:*

*Insight into Human Civilization over Time and Space*

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## Introduction of GUCR

The Global Urban Competitiveness Report (GUCR) is a cooperative research conducted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and UN-Habitat focusing on sustainable urban competitiveness, urban land and urban finance. Led the project is participated by experts from CASS, UN-Habitat and well-known scholars in relevant fields. Through theoretical research and empirical investigation, the report establishes an indicator system to measure the economic competitiveness and sustainable competitiveness of more than 1,000 cities in the world. Meanwhile, it selects important issues of global urban development as the themes for in-depth studies, aiming to promote the implementation of the UN 2030 agenda through the assessment of urban competitiveness. Currently, five annual reports have been published successively, among which GUCR (2018-2019) was launched at the UN headquarters in New York City during the 74th session of the UN General Assembly, and the GUCR (2019-2020) was released in Abu Dhabi during the 10th World Urban Forum.

## About the Authors



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# Part I : Annual General Report

## 1. Global Urban Value Chain: Insight into Human Civilization over Time and Space

The city is not only a great human project, but also a symbol and container of civilization, and a spatial unit of the laws of nature. The research on the world development from the angle of cities not only manifests exact and concrete goals, but also shows a novel perspective. **The global urban value chain goes through human civilization.** The study shows that to research on the biggest changes in a century entails investigation into the world system from the perspective of the urban system evolution. Human civilization is the positive value created continuously through interaction in a certain space. Cities and their systems are the fruits and containers created by human civilization. The global urban value chain accurately captures the evolution of the global urban civilization over time and space.

Figure 1 Dynamic conditions and mechanism of human settlement

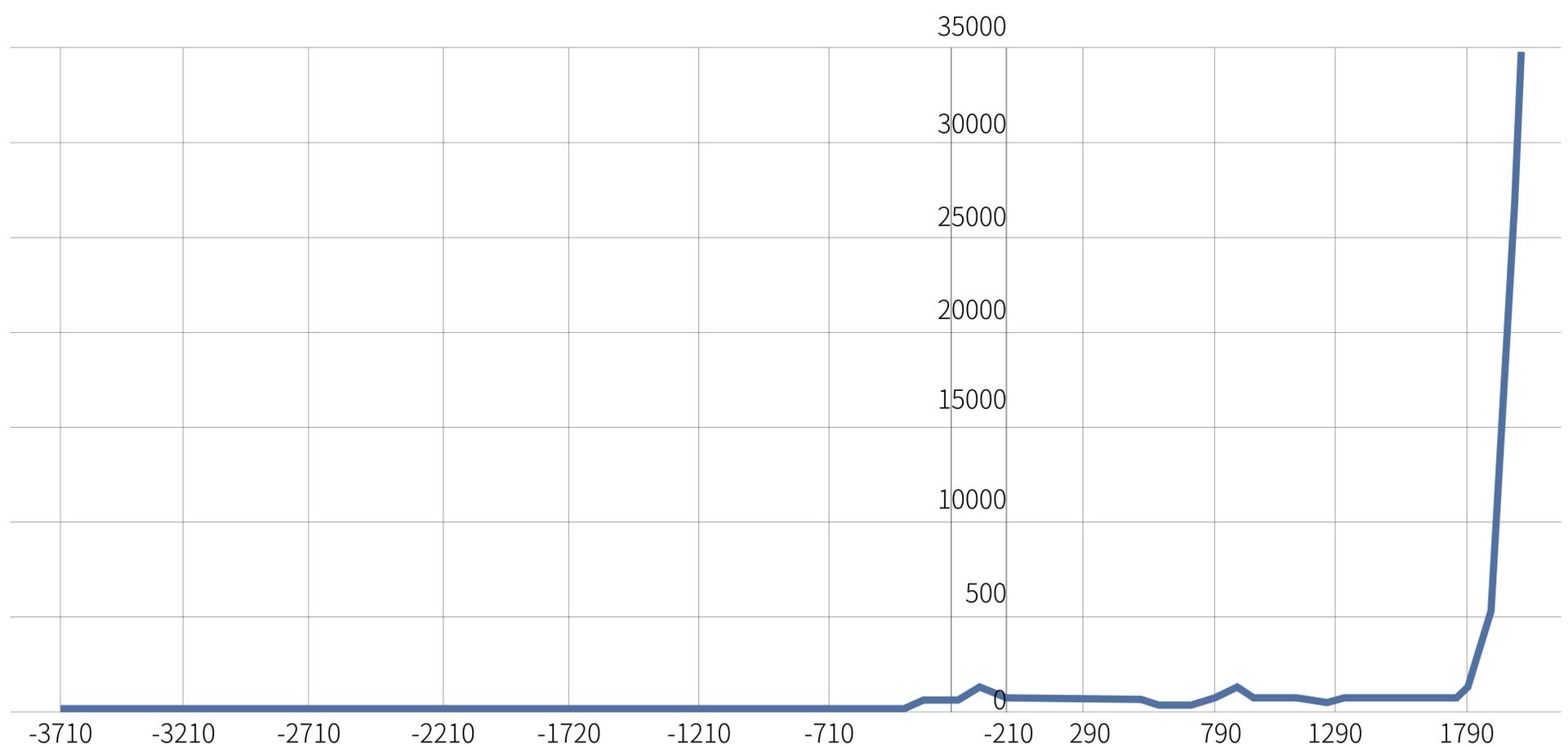


## 2. Global central cities are the locomotives of global development but always facing sustainable challenges

Global central cities lead the world's development by leading cities across the world. They not only create core value but also determine the global distribution of value, thus exerting global influence on an even greater scale. The agricultural age, the industrial age and the bio-intelligence age are completely different in scale, form, function and value creation. The center of the global central city value chain, after hovering around a low level for a long time, has taken off at a growing speed.

### (1) The population rapidly grows after hovering over a level for a long time

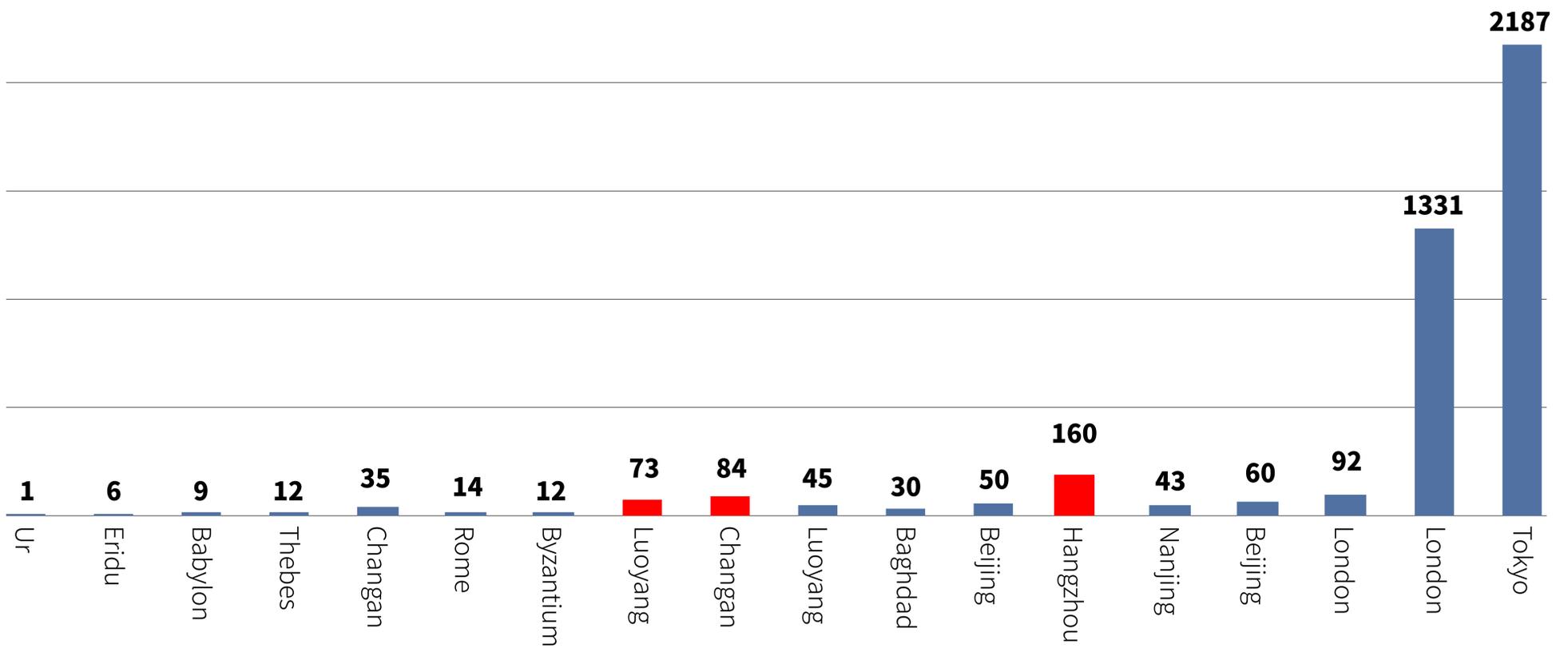
Figure 2 Population change in the largest city (population in the 10,000s)



### (2) The dominant function undergoes political, economic and cultural dominance in turn.

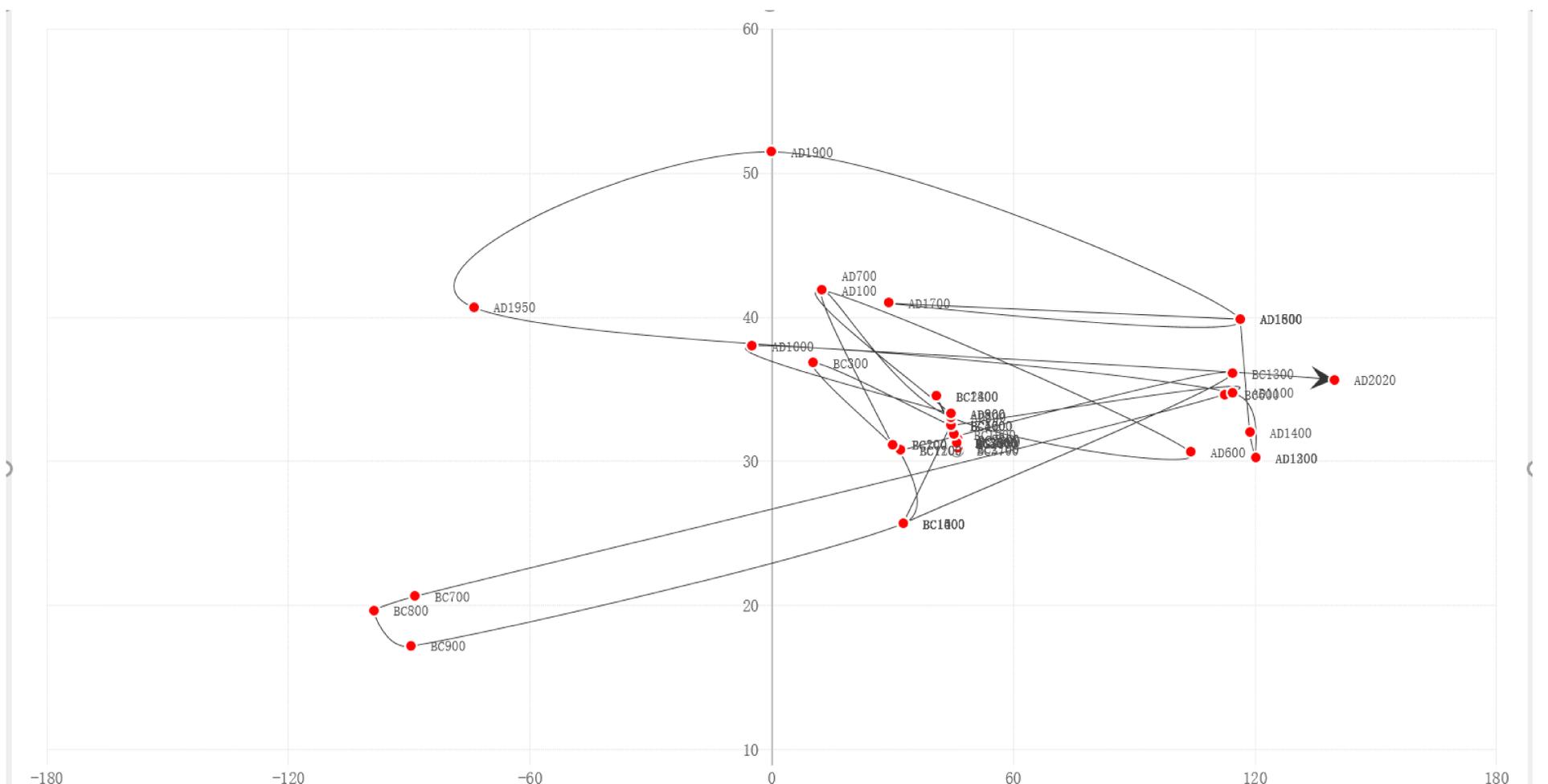
**(3) The spatial form has undergone a long-term slow change and then gets expanded and diversified through accelerated development.**

Figure 3 Changes in urban area in different periods (BC2900—AD2000)



**(4) The value centers, in continuous variation, undergo long-term slow change and short-term rapid rise.**

Figure 4 Variation of the world's largest urban center



### 3.Cities and their value chain system attributes are completely different in the era of agriculture, industry and intelligence

As for the global urban value chain system, the initial international city system has given way to the domestic and international two-tier system, and then to the multi-tier international system that has emerged and become prominent since the Industrial



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