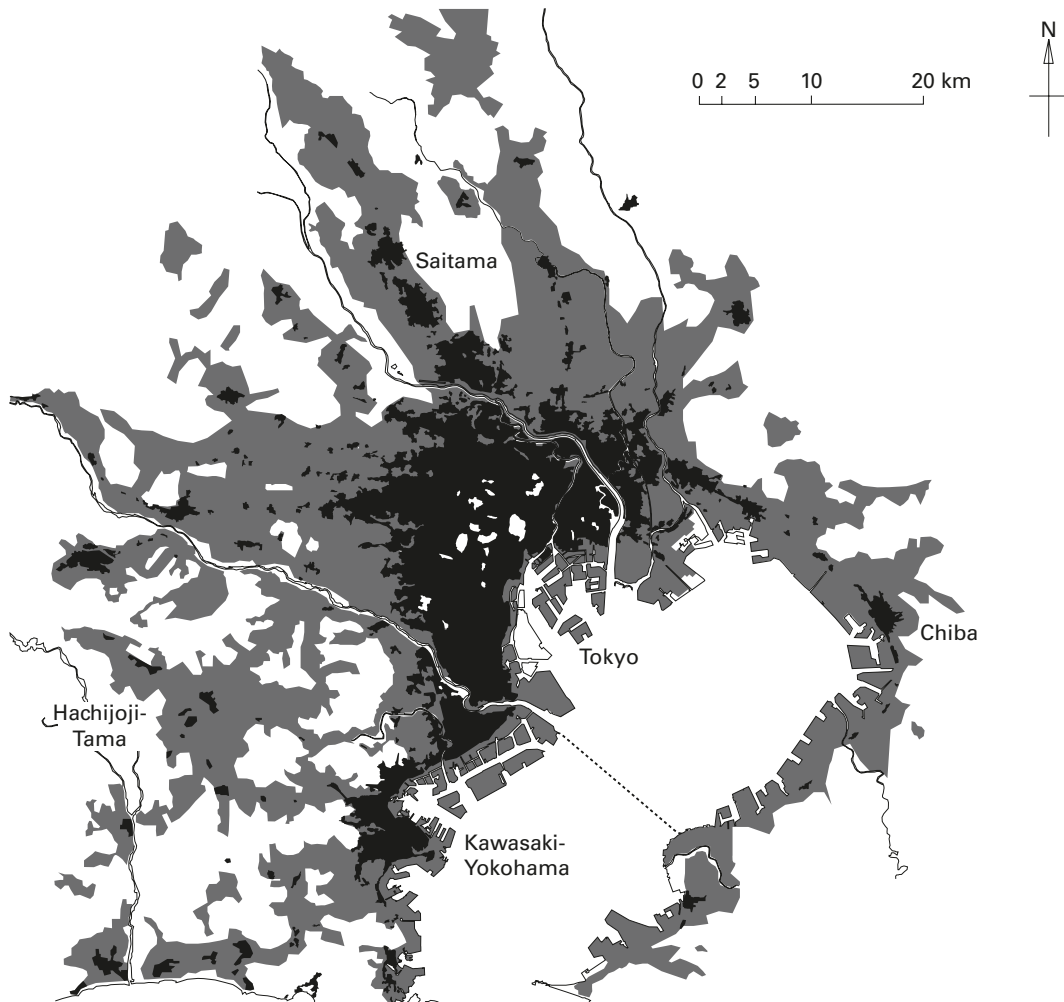


large, monocentric metropolis. After the Second World War through to the 1980s, Dutch authorities had controlled urban development from encroaching on the green area, in an effort to maintain the traditional Dutch landscape (VROM, 2000). The green heart would not have survived if these strict controls had not existed. Meanwhile, 'the Randstad maintains major links with other economic centres in the world through its harbors (Rotterdam) and airports (Amsterdam Schiphol)... The Randstad has seven universities. Furthermore, the four cities, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht, excel in social and cultural amenities, museums, theatres and conference centres' (Tummers and Schrijnen, 2000). People living in polycentric Randstad have similar levels of accessibility to urban functions as people living in a large monocentric metropolis with the same overall agglomeration mass. Furthermore, a polycentric region would be arguably more flexible in adapting to the changing work, consumption and family patterns that have emerged over recent years. For instance, households consisting of two working adults have become more commonplace and there is no reason why both should be commuting to the same central urban area. In a polycentric region, accessibility to employment can easily be facilitated by the strategic residential location for couples working in different cities (Evans and Taylor, 2001).

## Tokyo

The Tokyo wider metropolitan region, which extends over four prefectures (Tokyo, Saitama, Kanagawa and Chiba), comprises an area with a diameter of 100 km and has a population of approximately 30 million. Tokyo is a city that originally had a monocentric structure (see Figure 3.4). Just before the Second World War, the Yamanote line, a circular railway route 35 km in circumference, was completed which contributed to the post-war creation of subcentres, such as Shinjuku, Shibuya and Ikebukuro, responding to the rapid growth of the city towards the west. Today, the historic core district of Tokyo incorporates these subcentres, which together, make up the large monocentric core of the greater metropolitan-region. The adjacent local cities have been absorbed into the greater Tokyo region. Historically, these local cities, Saitama, Chiba, Hachioji-Tama and Kawasaki-Yokohama, developed independently of Tokyo. During the rapid economic growth of Japan in the 1960s and 1970s, these local cities were transformed into 'dormitory-towns' of Tokyo.



**Figure 3.4**  
Tokyo greater and wider  
metropolitan regions.

The majority of employed people living in these local cities commuted daily to the centre of Tokyo, coming home only to sleep at night. The over-concentration of urban functions in the single-business core led to urban problems, such as soaring office rents, housing shortages, overcrowded public transportation and traffic congestion.

In the second half of the 1980s, Japan experienced a spectacular economic boom, well known as 'bubble economy', characterized by huge increases in land values which forced the development strategy of Tokyo metropolitan-region to change. During this time, the 'dormitory-towns' of Tokyo were given a strategic role as new functional cores of economic activity in the expectation of further development of the wider