

## The north-east of the USA: a densely populated region



**Figure 6** Chicago, a major city in north-eastern USA

In the USA the greatest concentration of population is in the north-east, the first area of substantial European settlement. By the end of the nineteenth century it had become the greatest manufacturing region in the world and in the USA it became known as 'the manufacturing belt'. The region stretches inland from Boston and Washington to Chicago and St Louis. By the 1960s the very highly urbanised area between Boston and Washington had reached the level of a **megalopolis**. This is the term used to describe an area where many conurbations exist in relatively close proximity. The region is sometimes referred to as 'Boswash' after the main cities at its northern and southern extremities. Apart from Boston and Washington the other main cities in this region are New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore.

New York is classed as a 'global city' because it is one of the world's three great financial cities along with Tokyo and London. With a population of 8.4 million, New York is the most densely populated city in the USA. The population of New York alone is much greater than the entire Canadian northlands. The population of the larger Metropolitan Area of New York is 18.9 million.

The region also includes many smaller urban areas. Much of the area has an average density over 100 per km<sup>2</sup>. Population densities are of course much higher in the main urban areas. The rural parts of the region are generally fertile and intensively farmed. The climate and soils at this latitude are conducive to agriculture, unlike much of the Canadian northlands. Many people living in the rural communities commute to work in the towns and cities. The region has the most highly developed transport networks in North America. Although other parts of the country are growing at a faster rate, the intense concentration of job opportunities in the north-east will ensure that it remains the most densely populated part of the continent in the foreseeable future.

### Case study analysis

- 1 With the aid of an atlas, draw a sketch map of the north-east region to show its main physical and human features.
- 2 What is the population density of this region?
- 3 Why is this the most densely populated region in North America?