

WJEC Geography A-level

Changing Places

PMT Education

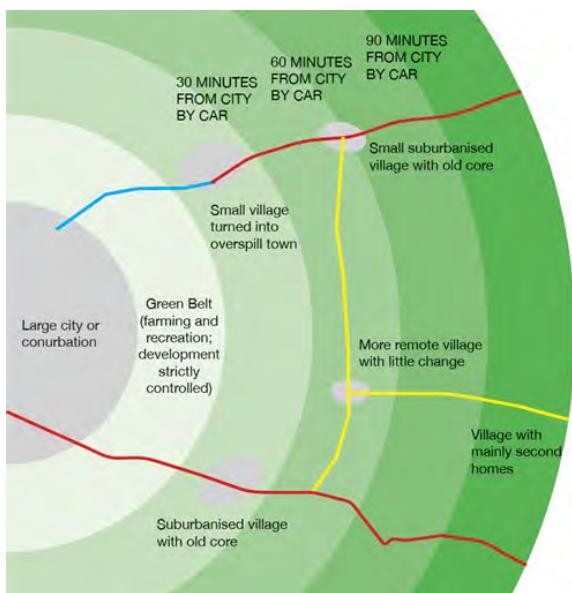
Written by Jeevan Singh



Changing Places

Changing Populations

- Change is driven by local, national and global processes which affect the demographic and cultures of local places. These processes include the movement of people, capital, information and resources and make places demographically and culturally **heterogeneous** whilst others remain less dynamic. The differences in areas create social inequalities.
- Population structures vary from place to place and over time. Globally, population growth has seen exponential growth since 1500. Places have increases in population due to increasing birth rates, decreasing death rates and a large number of migrants coming in.
- The UK population has grown unevenly in the last 50 years and is overall an ageing population, meaning the proportion of over 65s is greater than the younger working population. London and the south-east have seen a rapid population growth rate whilst north-east England has been growing at a much slower rate.



→ The rural-urban continuum is a classification that distinguishes metropolitan counties by their population size, and nonmetropolitan counties by their degree of urbanisation and closeness to metro areas, seen in the image on the left. The right image shows how urban and rural areas differ.



→ Population structure and density therefore varies according to placement in the rural-urban continuum. If you are in a rural area, the population will be sparser than that of an urban area.

→ Accessibility, physical factors, historical development and planning determine the rural-urban divide and so have an influence over population settlements.

→ Population structures and dynamics are also a result of differences in fertility and mortality rates and international and internal migration.

Places with high fertility rates, such as Niger, will have larger family sizes and a growing population with young dependents. Places with high mortality rates, such as Ukraine, will face natural decreases and a declining population.

Population Characteristics

- Population characteristics can have variations in gender and ethnicity. China's population, for instance, has a gender imbalance where there are more females than males. This is a result of the one child policy causing couples to abandon daughters in favour of having sons instead.
- Cultural diversity can be explained by social clustering, accessibility to key cities, physical factors and government planning policies which can suppress or foster diversity. Usually, migrants tend to cluster in one area, creating a culturally rich place (such as Southall in London being called 'Little India' shown above).



Culture and Society in the UK

- Significant internal movement of people had created uneven demographic and cultural patterns. For instance, London is highly diverse with a mix of British, Indian, African, Chinese and Caribbean cultures.
- Culture and society has changed in the UK because of international migration flows from former colonies. For example, from the 1950s onwards, the UK accepted migrants from the Indian sub-continent and the West Indies to fill the industrial jobs.
- Later on, from around the 1990s and 2000s, migrants came to the UK from the EU due to the free movement of people contract. This encouraged more than half a million Poles to come to the UK between 2004 and 2007.



- The main gatekeeper player here is the government who control and allow for such flows. The government can further encourage the acceptance of migrants by investing in integration programmes, encouraging companies to print flyers in multiple languages and having specific facilities available (such as specific foods/religious places of worship).
- For instance, David Cameron (shown on left) visited places of worship in the UK and abroad to create a sense of unity and acceptance. By doing this, the government inspire the integration of migrants and new cultures which tightens the nations as a whole.
- Some international migrants choose to live in rural areas. This could be due to background, such as living in a village environment in their own country, or for other specific reasons, such as employment opportunities in the agricultural sector. This can create social challenges as migrants will be the minority in rural areas since the majority move to urban regions for work.

Levels of Segregation

- Segregation levels reflect cultural, economic and social variation and change over time. International migrants tend to live in distinctive places, often termed as enclaves.
- Ethnic segregation is closely related to economic indicators, such as income and employment, and social indicators such as health, crime and education. Segregation then leads to stereotypes to form which creates bias and injustice within society.
- Diverse living spaces in urban areas have social characteristics that reflect ethnicity and culture. This can be in the form of distinctive retail outlets, such as an abundance of Indian takeaway restaurants and Polish kiosks, as well as places of worship and leisure.
- A walk down Kingstreet in Southall will display a myriad of cultures, places of worship and cuisines, displaying the social characteristics of the population inhabiting the area.
- Communities evolve economically and culturally as new attitudes and values are brought in. This can change the experiences and perceptions of living spaces over generations, leading to intergenerational attitudes and norms to change.



Changes to Diverse Places

- A sudden arrival of migrants can cause conflicts and riots. For instance there have been riots within the UK from British workers who feel denied from jobs as European workers are better skilled for the jobs.
- Different community groups, local and national governments and TNCs may make land use changes (e.g. build places of worship) which may cause tension as locals may disapprove. Migrants may thus face social exclusion which has been in the case in Glasgow.

Evaluating Living Spaces

- ➔ You can determine whether people have a positive or negative view of your chosen area by collecting statistical evidence on opinions, lived experience and attachment of individuals (can be done as a tally on whether people like living in the area along with what age group they are in, ethnicity, gender and length of residence).
- ➔ The more statistical evidence you collect, the more reliable and valid your conclusions will be. Stronger the evidence, better the conclusions and higher the mark!
- ➔ You can also use media to discover the presentation of your area. Media can provide contrasting evidence and pinpoint characteristics of your area and how people view it.
- ➔ It is also important to understand different representations of your area and how this can influence the perception of cultural and demographic issues and conflict.

Function and Characteristics of Places



- ➔ As places develop, functions and demographic characteristics change. Overtime, employment may change between administration, commercial, retail or industry whilst age structures and ethnic compositions alter demographics.
- ➔ Gentrification is the process of renovating a place to make it more attractive to the middle class and business world. An example of a place which has undergone gentrification is the London Docklands (shown on the left).
- ➔ Physical factors, accessibility and connectedness, historical development and the role of local/national planning contribute to the changes of places.

- ➔ These changes can be measured using employment trends, demographic changes, land use changes and levels of deprivation. Useful sources include area reports released by local councils. This report on the London Borough of Hounslow (http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/demographic_profile_analysis_jsna.pdf) presents the finding that deprivation has improved, the borough has become more diverse and population increase has grown greatly, leading to an increase in overcrowding which impacts social wellbeing.
- ➔ Deprivation is a complex concept and can be measured using the multiple deprivation index, taking into account income and health deprivation, crime, quality of the living environment and abandoned/derelict land.



Past and Present Connections

- ➔ Regional and national influences shape characteristics of places and this can be viewed visually by images, either contrasting two places or tracking before/after changes in one place.
- ➔ International and global influences can also shape places, for instance demographics may change if there is free movement of migration etc. Demographics can be analysed statistically and presented using graphs. Changes to an area can affect the lives of people and work to shape their identity, analysed through questionnaires/interviews.



Economic and Social Inequalities

- ➔ Successful regions, such as the San Francisco Bay area, have high rates of employment, inward migration (being both internal and international) and low levels of multiple deprivation. This, alongside high property prices and skills shortages in urban and rural areas, creates a wealthy and developing region.

- However, other places face a **cycle of decline** where one factor exacerbates another. In places such as the Rust Belt in the USA, economic restructuring has caused increasing levels of social deprivation, worsening education, health, crime, access to services and the living environment. This is the case in both deindustrialised urban areas and rural settlements which were once dominated by primary economic activities such as agriculture and manufacturing.
- Regeneration is thus done to create a balance and eradicate social and economic inequalities. By regenerating an area, business opportunities arise which improve social facilities and overall quality of life and wellbeing.
- There are priorities for regeneration due to the large variations in economic and social inequalities. Gated communities, 'sink estates', commuter villages and declining rural settlements are high priority areas.



Engagement and Experience of a Place

- There are also variations in the level of community engagement. This is measured through local and nation election turn outs, the number of community activities and the number of developed and supported local community groups. If an area is said to be more deprived, it will have a weaker and poorly integrated community. This can be managed by creating social groups and encouraging members to join.
- The lived experience and attachment of places varies according to:
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Ethnicity
 - Length of residence (student, migrant)
 - Levels of Deprivation
- These factors in turn impact on levels of engagement and community involvement.
- Conflicts can occur between different groups in communities who have contrasting views on priorities and strategies for regeneration. The causes to these conflicts are often complex but can be due to: the lack of political engagement and representation, ethnic tensions, inequality and lack of economic opportunity.



Urban Places

- Perception of places is dependent on lived experience and understanding of the area. During industrialisation, urban places were perceived as being dangerous and threatening (Victorian London), as they were the hotspots of crime, prostitution and corruption.
- Urban areas today in the UK may be seen as more attractive than previously as they are retail based, invite tourism and attract young people and migrants, due to the range of economic and social-leisure activities on show.
- Some urban areas, such as Newham, are still seen as undesirable and threatening by residents/outsiders because of high crime rates, low environmental quality, high deprivation rates and poor population characteristics and reputation. This is gathered through quantitative data, media representation and from those who have lived experiences.
- Suburban areas are family based residential areas whilst inner city areas are populated by commuters and workers of the city. The desirability of these regions are perceived differently depending on demographic groups by age, ethnicity and life-cycle stage. For instance, the inner city may be desirable for a migrant due to being in close proximity to the city and having a large cultural base but may not be perceived well for an elderly resident due to the busy nature and potential lack of care opportunities.



Rural Places

- ➔ Like urban areas, rural places are seen differently by groups of people because of their lived experience and perception of those places.
- ➔ Rural places are often seen as idyllic because of their tranquillity, natural landscape and historical/cultural associations. For instance, Hardy's Wessex and the Bronte landscape are famous for being home to popular British authors.
- ➔ Others view the rural regions unfavourably because of their remoteness, limited social opportunities and limited range of services, high transport costs, population characteristics and reputation, gathered through quantitative data, media representation and lived experiences. For instance, in Taunton, Somerset, the nearest hospital is at least 50 to 70 minutes away from the village centre.
- ➔ Some view rural areas as remote areas, others see them as retirement villages and holiday landscapes. It is clear that attitudes vary greatly and this can be further explored through undertaking questionnaires or interviews to gain knowledge on how people view rural areas.



Urban Regeneration and Urban Stakeholders

- ➔ Plans in 2015 were released about regenerating Belfast to increase the employment and residential population, manage the retail offer, maximise tourism, create a green centre, connect the city and enhance social impact and shared spaces.
- ➔ The regeneration of Belfast City uses the following strategies:
 - Plans for five Special Action Areas
 - Enhancing city streets and security
 - Furthering regeneration schemes including the North East Quarter
 - Developing a festivals strategy
 - Creating plans for the digital and creative sectors
 - Developing city transport systems and creating more parking spaces
 - Creating a social impact plan and a cultural plan
- ➔ A £18.77 million City Centre Development Fund has been established to begin the project. The programme aims on integrating ideas from different key players and keeping stakeholders from across the city at the heart of the development strategies.
- ➔ Future success of this plan depends on past decisions and plans being made now. The changes taking place can be judged using economic, social, demographic and environmental variables to predict whether regeneration projects will be successful and sustainable.
- ➔ Stakeholders can involve local/national governments, local businesses and residents and will have contrasting opinions on the success of schemes. Their views will be shaped depending on their lived experience and attachment to the area and whether the identity of the area is similar or changed from how they wanted it.



Rural Regeneration and Rural Stakeholders

- ➔ Rural regeneration in Cheshire West and Chester, adopted in 2011, was planned to attract an additional 17000 young people/families/those of working age, meet housing needs, safeguard local services, support



sustainable growth, address market failures and reduce the consumption of fossil fuels.

- ➔ This was planned to be done by: creating a new structure for rural governance so local opinions are heard, managing and utilising public assets, protecting the natural and historical environment whilst creating asset management and future planning for young people.

The Role of UK Government Policies

- ➔ By investing in infrastructure, such as high speed rails and airport developments, UK governments can maintain growth and improve accessibility to regenerate regions. It is often the role of national governments to facilitate regeneration projects in partnership with charities and developers.



- ➔ Rate and type of development, such as planning laws, creating house building targets, considering housing affordability and gaining permissions, affect economic regeneration of both rural and urban regions. Government

actions may prioritise national over local needs and opinions which can delay regeneration projects and thus worsen inequalities.



- ➔ UK government decisions about international migration and the deregulation of capital markets (allowing for foreign investment in London real estate) significantly impact growth and direct/indirect investment. This can be done by the government, for instance, creating open door migration policies.

Local Government Policies

- ➔ Local governments compete to create business environments with designated areas for development to attract domestic and foreign investors. It is the actions of these local authorities that will determine the success of the regeneration projects.



- ➔ Local interest groups are vital in decision-making and creating regeneration project. This can include groups such as 'Chambers of Commerce', local preservation societies and trade unions. However, there is often conflict between these groups as interests differ; some may wish to preserve urban landscapes whilst others seek to change it.

- ➔ For instance, investment for the London Olympic Games provided regeneration for London but some argued that it was a case of rebuilding rather than regenerating whilst others despised the programme entirely it missed the chance of creating a 'living and working neighbourhood'. (BBC, 2012)

- ➔ Urban and rural regeneration strategies include:
 - Retail-led Plans: Creates business and job opportunities
 - Tourism: Brings money into the area and provides a flow of culture and positive media attention, propelling the area onto a global stage.
 - Leisure and Sport: Allows for community integration and social wellbeing.

