

# AQA Geography A-level

## 3.2.2: Changing Places Detailed Notes



## Overview

**Changing places** is a different type of unit to others you will study. There are concepts and knowledge to learn, but less than in other units. Changing places is **based around people** and is **more conceptual and contextual**. Attempt to apply the concepts you learn to a place that you know. Changing places covers a **sociological** aspect of geography.

You will study at least **one local place** where you live or an area or have conducted fieldwork. You will also need a **distant place** which has ideas of local, regional, national and international connections. These two places should form case studies. An exam question may suggest for you to refer to your **local and/or distant place**.

## Place

The word **place** has more than one dimension. A **location** is the **physical point** of where a **place** is. A **place** is a **location** which has **different meanings to various people**. Edward Relph is a key influence on modern day understanding of place due to his 1976 publication, '**Place and Placelessness**', which aimed to '**reimagine the static and dimensional aspects of place**' that were once widely accepted. Edward Relph's website (<http://www.placeness.com/>) is informative.

**Locales** are **locations** in a place that are **associated with everyday activities** e.g. school, sports ground or theatre. A **locale structures social interactions** and people are likely to show **behavioural traits** specific in a locale. People are likely to be sociable in a theatre, but will speak more quietly in a library to conform with **social stereotypes**. This may occur subconsciously.

We understand place to have an **emotional meaning** and **relationship with people**. **Sense of place** is the **subjective emotional attachment to a place** which gives it meaning. A sense of place to you might be, 'I have a strong attachment to my house, it is where I grew up'. The feeling towards your house, street or neighbourhood, is the **sense of place**.



The MUTI graphic shows Warsaw. The **locales** are the doughnut shop, shopping centre, cafe and offices. The **sense of place** is the different meaning of the place to different people. For some, Warsaw is a tourist destination they have enjoyed visiting. A person may have a particular **attachment** to a cafe if they had lunch with another tourist. However, an office worker in the same area may have a negative **sense of place** if they do not enjoy their job. These two people will have contrasting sense of places.

## Placelessness

**Placelessness** suggests that a place is **not unique**. For example, most UK high streets have a Costa Coffee, Greggs, Ladbrokes and a Tesco (or similar **chain shops**). If these are the **locales** that structure interactions and help develop **sense of place** and they are the same or similar in different locations, then what makes these locations different? They are **clone towns** due to the dominance of **chain shops**. It could also be argued that as place is about people and different people will interact in the different **locales**, then these places are in fact unique. The **individual memories** which people create within their **locales** are what make the area unique to them.



## Attachment

The geographer Yi-Fu Tuan suggests that **attachment** (a feeling binding one subject with another) to a place, grows stronger over time. As you have more **experiences** in a place, you are more likely to be attached with that place. Experiences can have **different levels of intensity**: marriage is likely to be a more intense experience than a work trip. The **greater the intensity** and **number of experiences** you have in a place, the **greater the depth of attachment** you may have to a place. If you spend long enough in a place with many **positive and intense experiences**, it will become home. Hence the phrase, 'home is where your heart is' refers to **emotional attachment**.

**Topophilia** concerns the **love of a place** and having a **strong attachment** to it. Whereas **Topophobia** is the **dislike of a place**. It may be possible to experience **topophobia** and still have a strong attachment with a place, but the attachment will be negative.

## Types of Places

Places can be categorised into types, though a single place may fit into many categories:

- **Near Places:** Those which are **close** to us. Near places are **subjective**. A woman living in the Australian outback may consider a place that is 100km away to be near, due to the ability to directly drive between settlements across the outback. In the UK a place that is 100km away may take several hours to travel to and may be considered as a far place
- **Far Places:** Those that are **distant**. Both **near and far places** may have a more **emotional meaning**. Some people may get 'homesick' if they are staying away for the first time in their lives even if they are only ten minutes drive away. They may feel 'far' away emotionally, even if they are physically close
- **Experienced Places:** Places that we have actually visited. Some people would argue that you have to visit a place to create an **emotional attachment** to it. Others would suggest that a desire to visit a place or dislike towards it because of what you have seen through the media, is enough to create an emotional attachment
- **Media Places:** Places we have **not visited**, but may have learned about through **media representations**. For example, the musician 'Vancouver Sleep Clinic' chose his artist name because he had experienced Vancouver as a media place and thought 'it looks like a beautiful place'. Most geographers would argue you have a more **intense experience** by visiting a place, which leads to a **stronger attachment** to it, due to the stimulation of all your senses. Media sources can change our sense of place **subconsciously**. Detroit is often presented as a rundown, neglected city, yet Lonely Planet ranked Detroit as its No. 2 city to visit in 2018! Does this change your sense of place for Detroit?

## Genius Loci

**Genius loci** is the **spirit** of a place. It suggests that every place has a unique spirit or atmosphere, based on everything for the location is made up of, now and in the past.



## Place Character

**Place character** relates to the **specific qualities, attributes or features** of a location that make it unique. Place character is affected by **endogenous and exogenous** factors:

### Endogenous Factors

**Endogenous Factors:** Those which **originate from within** the place and are **local**:

- **Land Use** - Is the area **urban or rural**?
- **Topography** - The **relief** and lie of the land
- **Physical Geography** - Are there **natural physical features** such as waterfalls or estuaries?
- **Infrastructure** - Built services that **enhance** or are **essential** to living conditions:
  - Roads, railways, canals, airports
  - Broadband and phone networks, water supply, sewers and electrical grids
  - Parks, public pools, schools, hospitals, libraries
  - Education system, health care provision, local government, law enforcement, emergency services
- **Demographic Characteristics** - **Age, gender, number, ethnicity** of the population
- **Built Environment** - The architecture of the area. Contemporary, ageing, historical
- **Location** - Elevation, distance to the coast etc.
- **Economic Characteristics** - In debt, growth market, ageing industries, economic sectors

### Exogenous Factors

**Exogenous Factors:** Those which **originate from outside** a place and provide **linkages and relationships** with and to other places. Exogenous factors are commonly referred to as **flows** of:

- **People** - **Impact** of tourists, workers, migrants, refugees, visitors and changing quantities of people on an area **over time**
  - Germany has around **1.4 million asylum seekers**, who integrate into their society, though also creating political and social disputes. Inevitably this will impact the character of Germany
- **Money and Investment** - **Trade** deals, tax, major **events** (e.g. sports competition), new businesses or movement of business from an area
  - Investment into the Stratford, London before, during and after it hosted the Olympics has had a long-lasting impact on its place character. Smaller sporting events may have a short-term impact.
- **Resources** - Availability of **raw materials**, products, food, water and energy
  - Due to good transportation networks, the UK is food secure. If the crops fail one year more food can be imported from other countries to make up for the deficit. In less developed countries this is unlikely to be possible.
- **Ideas** - Entrepreneurs may move to an area bringing new businesses with them. Ideas could be information about an area from another country. Designers drive creative processes within an area.
  - Detroit has been impacted by the ideas of urban planners which have helped develop the city, leading to positive reviews by Lonely Planet. This has driven the tourist industry of Detroit, impacting on its character

Over time, **endogenous factors will be shaped by the changing flows of exogenous factors**.



## Rio de Janeiro 2016 Olympics




Rio hosted the 2016 Olympics. (<http://www.city-data.com/world-cities/Rio-de-Janeiro.html>) This is a fact file for Rio which covers the city in great detail. Look through to identify some of the **exogenous and endogenous factors** that contribute to the **character** of the city. Which is the most important factor? If place is all about people, then maybe it is the **endogenous factor of demographics**, or are the **exogenous flows of people** more important? How could you relate a similar fact file to a place which you have studied?

Over time, **endogenous factors will be shaped by the changing flows of exogenous factors**. In the short-term, the **influx of people as an exogenous factor** during the 2016 Olympics will have caused the city to have become busier, leading to a **short-term impact on sense of place**. In the long-term, the investment and movements to bulldoze some areas of the Favela's will have changed the **economic and social characteristics** of the city. The **built environment** is affected by the new stadiums that were built.

## Perspective on Places

### Insiders and Outsiders

**Insiders** are those people who feel at home within  and may have the following characteristics:

- **Born in** 
- They hold **citizenship** for 
- **Fluent in local language** and conform with **idioms** (language relating to a specific location or culture). For example 'kill two birds with one stone' might be a complicated phrase for migrants to understand. Some local idioms may be specific to places. This is a dictionary of London Slang: [www.timwoods.org/the-london-slang-dictionary-project/](http://www.timwoods.org/the-london-slang-dictionary-project/)
- Conforms with **social norms and behavioral traits** common in 

**Outsiders** are the opposite to **insiders**. Lots of factors can contribute to make someone feel like an insider or outsider in a place. This feeling of belonging **can change over time**.

It can be the case that people who do not belong to the main **ethnic group** of a community feel like **outsiders**. For example, an **immigrant family** could have moved into a neighbourhood where they are an **ethnic minority** which - combined with other factors - may cause the family to feel like **outsiders**. For example:

- Initially, they may not be accustomed to the **culture, social norms** and **dialect** of the majority of the community.
- The shops and restaurants along the high street may not be **familiar** to them.
- They may find it hard to find particular foods which they had in their **country of origin**.
- The **architecture** of the buildings and the **vehicles** on the street may look different from what they are used to. (These feelings could be similar to how you feel when you go on holiday and your surroundings are different to usual).

These feelings of **unfamiliarity** may change in the **long-term**. As the family get used to living in that place and integrate into **society**, they can feel like **insiders**. The children of an **immigrant family** will have a different **experience of place** to their parents, leading to a **unique sense of place** for the area where they live.

All over the world, including the UK, there is a pattern whereby **ethnic groups cluster** in certain areas, potentially because people feel more **at home** surrounded by other people sharing the same **ethnicity**. The **clustering** means that the area will **adapt towards that culture** over time, which may attract more people from that **ethnicity** to move there. These [city lab maps](#) show where **different ethnicities** tend to cluster in London.



**Perspective of place** may also change so that people begin to feel like **outsiders**, even if they initially identified as **insiders** to a place. For example, large **influxes of immigrants** into an area can change the characteristics of a place. The **high street** may change as shops and restaurants adapt over time to cater for new **cultures**, which can make the original residents begin to feel like **outsiders** as their **surroundings become unfamiliar**. Alternatively, some people may **embrace multiculturalism** and the changes that occur as a result of **immigration** and like the **diversity** of their high street. Diversity makes some places appealing e.g. **Chinatown** attracts large numbers of tourists each year.



<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-10-09/before-and-after-gentrification/6835788>

Gentrification is the process of **renovation and improvement** of housing to suit a **middle class** audience, usually leading to higher house prices. Gentrification can cause insiders to feel like outsiders over time; entire districts can change and adapt to suit a different audience, meaning insiders may feel like they do not fit in with the **culture** or the **class**. In Berlin, for example, (pictured above) many areas are becoming renovated to fit the new **trendy** and 'hipster' feel of the city, leaving old residents not only isolated, but unable to keep up with higher rents.

This feeling of being an **outsider** can also occur after **large scale regeneration projects**, which lead to changes in **place character**. The **demolition and reconstruction** of buildings, **investments** into new **facilities**, and a subsequent **better quality of life** can **alter the demographic of an area**. This can potentially cause the original population to feel like **outsiders**.

An example of this is the major **regenerations in Stratford for the 2012 Olympic games**. This [interactive article](#) allows you to compare the area side by side before and after regeneration, giving an insight into how the sense of place has changed dramatically in the space of a few years. (<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/interactive/2012/jul/27/olympic-regeneration-legacy-stratford>)

The area, now called **East Village**, was previously a **deindustrialised** area, contaminated with **waste** and full of derelict **industrial buildings**. In some of the areas, such as Clays Lane and Waterden Crescent, the population was majorly comprised of **Irish travellers**. The area is now a mixture of low cost and private housing, and one of the traveller camp sites was regenerated into a broadcasting booth. How do you think previous insiders would feel after these dramatic regeneration projects, inviting wealth and new facilities into the previously poverty stricken neighbourhood?



## The Other

'The other' refers to people who are **unfamiliar or different to the self**. **Conflict** and **social tensions** can exist when people who **do not have the same identity** (the qualities, beliefs and attachments) as other people they meet. When people are considered 'other' it makes it easier to be **prejudiced** against them as they seem 'alien' to us and can be dehumanised. For example, metaphorical language used by some in the media to describe immigrants can exacerbate negative feelings towards immigration. **Conflict** could also be due to **racism or xenophobia** (**fear** or distrust to something that is uncommon or **out of place**). **Xenophobia** is most commonly seen in modern day society as **suspicion towards migrants** and **foreigners**. This links into **prejudice** and is a complicated issue to solve. Identity and mindsets such as **racism and xenophobia** can lead to **segregation** and also shape places.

This **sense of 'other'** isn't limited to how residents see immigrants. Immigrants can also see **native residents as 'other'**; both these interactions can mean a lack of social integration, exacerbating issues of conflict within an area. Conflict and tensions can arise when **different groups of people have different ideas towards how an area should develop**.

## Case Studies

Your **distant and/or near place** should cover at least one of these topic areas:

- Demographic and Cultural Characteristics
- Economic Change and Social Inequalities

For that place, consider how each **endogenous and exogenous** factor may affect the above categories and consider the linkages between the **endogenous and exogenous** factors. You should consider how **government policies, TNC's or global institutions** seek to **reduce inequalities** and **segregation**. It may be the case that they have caused these issues in the first place, or their actions are continuing to exacerbate issues.

If you were studying Barcelona, you might research how **past connections** with Catalonia are leading to **present day social inequalities**. This might have influenced the **demographic characteristics** with a higher muslim population and a different **culture** compared to other areas of Spain. Are present processes of **rebellion** and actions such as Brexit from other countries governments (UK) and other international institutions (EU) motivating rebellion which lead to the illegal referendum in 2017? Has this affected tourism in Barcelona due to the demonstrations or are people more aware of Barcelona and more likely to visit?



As you must **research your place studies individually**, it can be difficult to find **reliable sources of information** about your places. To avoid a **misinformed place study**, it is important to include information **from a range of reliable sources**.

## Census Data

Census data can be useful for providing insight into both the **past and present** character of a place, especially **demographic and economic** characteristics. **Nomis** is a website provided by the Office for National Statistics, providing **reliable data** on different areas.

**Advantages:**  
Data is reliable and factual.

**Disadvantages:**  
Quantitative data may **ignore** important opinions, e.g. data may show an area as poor and derelict, but this does not reflect residents' **opinions** of their place.

## Field Trips

Visiting your near and far places will develop your own **personal sense of place**. You could interview residents to gain information about the current living situation, as well as the **past character of place** and how a place has changed. You could also collect your own quantitative data.

**Advantages:**  
You can make your own opinion rather than relying on media's presentation of a place.

**Disadvantages:**  
You may hold personal bias for/ against a place, which could influence qualitative descriptions. Opinions are hard to measure.

## Art & Media

Artistic representations are good sources of people's opinions on places. Songs, artwork, films, TV, and literature present a place's **culture**, as well as people's **lived experiences** in places. For example, the **Romantic poets** presented the Lake District positively in their work.

**Advantages:**  
Art and media is a major contributor to an area's character, so it is important to recognise the influence it has on sense of place.

**Disadvantages:**  
Not quantitative, meaning it is hard to compare/ measure.

## Advertising

Tourism and business sectors of a place often advertise an area in order to **attract** people to it/ **invest** in it. This form of media is useful for gathering information about a place, such as the different attractions and history.

**Advantages:**  
Advertising often presents **multiple dimensions of a place**, meaning a lot of information is compiled into one source. A place's attractions add to their character, so they are important to consider.

**Disadvantages:**  
Advertising may show a **one-sided, biased** view, ignoring the **negatives** of an area. Some areas may not be tourist or business based, meaning there is little **advertising** needed.

## Maps & Photos

Maps and photos present a factual and objective view of a place. They are also useful to compare **past and present places**, as there are many archived maps and photos of places.

**Advantages:**  
The ability to compare a place's **past** is important, as you should consider how a place has developed and changed over time. Maps and photos may not be influenced by people's opinions on a place and they are objective.

**Disadvantages:**  
Photos may still have a subjective view (i.e. only showing good/ bad areas). Although they are good for finding information and developing your sense of place, these sources of information are difficult to cite in an exam.

## Source Reliability

In the exam you may be provided with **sources** to analyse and then apply to the question. Practice this by reading news articles and highlighting the key information as quickly as possible - don't highlight too much! You may need to analyse the **reliability** of sources. Is the source **objective** and does it reflect the true nature of the subject? Is the source **biased** and the subject of the source **manipulated**? It is difficult to be certain of source **reliability** so a mix of different sources is preferable. To observe source **reliability**:





- Does the source give a **positive or negative** portrayal of a place? Is the source balanced?
- What is the purpose of the source? Who was the source produced by? **Provenance** can be used to describe the **origin** of the source
- Do other sources describing a place offer a different **perspective**, or support the source?
- Does the source link to **contemporary issues or geographical concepts**?
- What does the source not show? These are two different place representations of Vancouver. Sources: (Tourism Vancouver, Vancouver Observer) They show the different realities of Vancouver for the tourism industry and the homeless people living there:



Consider the following articles and the different perspectives on London that they offer:

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/08/24/notting-hill-carnival-use-knife-arches-first-time-comb-at-london/>

<https://www.paralympic.org/news/london-2017-speech-mayor-london-sadiq-khan>

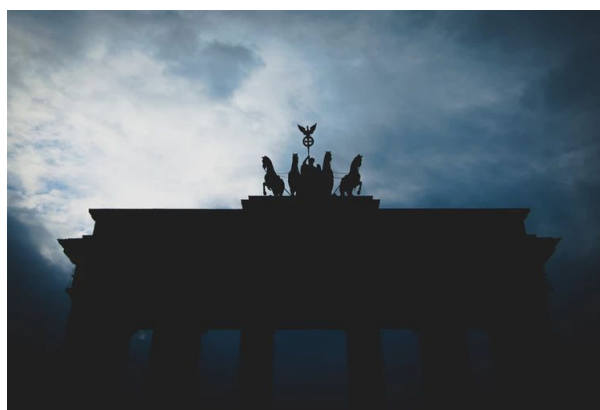
<https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/london-attack-tourist-safety-is-it-safe-to-travel-to-cities-attacked-by-terrorists-a7646661.html>

## Place Meanings

**Place meaning** refers to the **sense of place and character** that different people give to a place. It is how a place is **represented by tourist organisations, governments, corporate bodies and community groups**. These groups drive changes to places and are known as **forces of change**:

- Community Groups
- Governments
- Councils
- Individuals
- TNC's
- National Organisations
- International Organisations
- Global Organisations

**Place meaning** is shaped by the **past and present connections** of a place on a **variety of scales** from global to local. For example, the **place meaning** of Berlin is impacted by the World Wars and the Cold War and the connections with places such as the UK and Russia that it had. This shapes **tourism** in Berlin. Its **present connections** with the EU make it a popular destination for migrants and this shapes the **flows of people** into the city. The **government policies** of Angela Merkel to allow migrants has further shaped this connection. Racist **community groups** in Germany formed by past connections are making migrants feel unwanted. This has impacted the place-meaning of Germany. It has caused



**global groups** such as Migrants Rights International to promote the cause for migrants in Germany. **Individual activists** such as Sophia Lösche fought for migrants and for a more welcoming Germany, but she was unfortunately killed for her views. Despite this, **Visit Berlin** are using the slogan of 'the city of freedom'. This is **rebranding** to overcome past place-meanings and fight against the **current changes** that may be occurring.

**Rebranding** is the process by which forces of change aim to adapt the place meaning of a location. This could be to encourage tourism by promoting the **endogenous or exogenous characteristics** of a place, to overcome **negative connotations**. **Communities** can change place representation and this commonly takes place in the form of **social media campaigns**.

**Rebranding** involves:

- Advertising Campaigns
- Infrastructure and Built Environment Improvements
- Positive Media Coverage
- Tourist Board Management

To achieve this:

- **Community groups** may levy media groups to positively or negatively portray a place
- **Councils** may invest in tourism boards to portray a positive image of a location
- **Governments** may set out strategies such as improving infrastructure
- **Individuals** may start social media campaigns which suggest a different image of a place

Place representation may take place in different forms:

- Websites
- Posters
- Songs
- Videos
- Photographs
- News Articles

Additionally places may be represented by **census data, graphs or measures such as Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)**. The IMD uses seven measures to map the most deprived areas of the UK and when displayed in a map form, can be easily read.

The map below shows poverty across the USA.

When analysing **geospatial data** (data that has a location) such as the choropleth map above it is important to consider **reliability**. A large block of colour showing high poverty percentages, may suggest greater numbers of people living in poverty than in smaller geographical areas of the same colour which may be false. The abrupt boundaries do not reflect the actual spread of poverty which will be more distributed. Geospatial data can be **misleading** so is more reliable when compared with another source.

