Edexcel IAL Geography

Urban Problems, Planning & Regeneration

Essential Notes

Problems with Urban Cities

Urban cities are the most populated places in the world; there are more people living in **urban** areas than **rural** areas. **55% of people live in urban areas** which is a 25% increase from 1950. Cities are important because they attract businesses and FDI and have a large influence over the country's economy.

Urban cities - both in the **developed and developing** countries - face issues regarding provision of **services and housing**. As an urban hub grows, **inequality** between residents and within industry may grow. For cities with rapidly growing populations, **transport networks** can come under pressure, as there is increased congestion and overcrowding of existing services.

As the **global population** continues to grow, and the world continues to become **interconnected** through globalisation (encouraging international migration), problems within urban cities are set to increase and worsen.

Housing Provision
As the population of urban cities grows, the number of houses needed will also increase. Not all countries have a large enough supply of houses for their population, for different reasons:

- Where the **demand** for housing **exceeds** the **supply**, house prices tend to be high. This can be problematic for **first time buyers** and **young families** who may find housing unaffordable.
- A **sudden population growth** within an urban city (often due to an influx of migrants) can lead to the creation of **informal housing**, known as shanty towns or slums, constructed using **salvaged materials** - corrugated metals, timber, tarpaulin.

Shanty Town - Problems for Health & Wellbeing

Shanty towns have no planning permission so they are rarely catered for by the government and have some of the **worst provisions** of services and infrastructure.

➔ There are no pipelines underneath to carry clean water and electricity into the houses within a shanty town. This forces families to **travel for water** from natural sources (which is vulnerable to pollution) or **buy water** from tankers (which can be expensive).
➔ Since there are no pipelines and infrastructure constructed beneath shanty towns, **sewage** is rarely taken away. Instead, shanty towns may have **open sewers** and **communal toilets**, which can lead to an increase in **mosquitoes** and **infant mortality rates**, since children may play around the open sewage or within dirty water.

The **quality of life** within a shanty town is extremely low. Life expectancy is lower than the country's average, due to the **risk to health** due to unsafe water supply and open sewage. There is very limited provision of healthcare in the shanty towns to combat the risk of disease, and so the **mortality rate** is higher than average and **life expectancy** is low.

Managing Waste

Solid waste - rubbish & debris - can be difficult to dispose of properly, in both developed and developing countries. There are many different sources of waste:

- **Domestic** - food waste, throw-away cheap clothing, single-use plastic waste, litter.
- **Industry** - Waste chemicals and materials (especially from manufacturing), food waste in restaurants, packaging for logistics.
- **Construction** - Decontamination and clearing previously-used land, debris from old buildings.

If the city has limited space available, waste **disposal sites** may be expensive to run and limited land available for **landfill**. Also, if the city is overcrowded, **bin collection** may be difficult to run between closely built houses. This can cause litter and waste to build up in the streets. Some cities suffer from trade dumping their waste, causing large piles of waste across the city.

Some urban areas are **positively managing** their waste by:
- Having regular domestic bin collection.
- Recycling some waste (plastic, glass, metal, paper) to reduce the amount sent to landfill.
- Regulating industrial waste and persecuting fly-tippers.
- Encouraging a reduction in waste by clothes recycling and taxing single-use packaging, for example.

Inequality within Urban Spaces

Economic Inequality

In most cities, there is **inequality** between residents' income and employment.

Cities have varied industry compositions, and so there is a large range of employment opportunities. Cities may **specialise** in a particular sector, due to **reputation**, skills of their **workforce** or access to resources. Cities tend to have large secondary and tertiary industries:
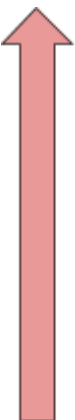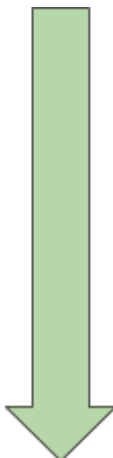
- Some cities have become hubs for **secondary** manufacturing industry, such as Chongquin, Chicago, Shanghai. This may be due to large **warehouse** spaces, good **logistic links** and a **large, cheap workforce** available. Secondary industry workers may be **vulnerable to exploitation**: long working hours, overcrowding, limited health & safety protection for machinery.
- **Tertiary** workers are important to maintaining a healthy population and functioning city. Tertiary workers include:
    - Bin Men
    - Water Sellers
    - Teachers
    - Medical Professionals - Nurses, Doctors, Pharmacists

    Tertiary workers also include **office-workers** and call centre operatives. Some cities have a reputation for having a **skilled workforce**, such as Bangalore where most people can speak English as a second language (the language of international business), and so have large

successful tertiary industries. Tertiary workers can be **well supported** by the government, with regulated pay, holidays and sick pay and sometimes childcare support.

Inequality tends to correlate to the sector you work in; there is **inequality in pay** between the sectors and each sector differs in level of risk, support available and opportunity to progress:

Sector of Employment	Average Wages	Risk to Life	Qualifications Needed
Primary Secondary Tertiary Quaternary	Lowest Paid Highest Paid	Highest Risk, due to laborious work Lowest Risk, since often based in an office	Often no qualifications needed Recruitment requires a degree

Informal Employment

Informal work is employment **not recognised or controlled by the state** and includes a variety of jobs. In developed countries, informal work consists of **10-20%** of the economy whereas in developing countries, the informal sectors can contribute up to **70%** of the country's economy.

Informal work is often associated with **illegal** or **unlicenced** work, such as:
- Selling **Prohibited** Items - Alcohol, Cigarettes, Guns, Knives.
- Beach & Tourist **Vendors** - often selling to tourists.

Informal work also includes **untaxed or undeclared work**, and so many formal businesses may employ a few informal workers and choose not to declare their employment to avoid tax:
- Part-time Waitressing or Dishwasher
- Farm hands, bricklayers, small-scale manufacturing

The informal sector is **perceived** as **negative** since workers **rarely pay tax** and sometimes **promote illegal pursuits** - gambling, drugs, weapons, etc. However, informal work can **create small businesses** (as the informal work develops, they are more likely to expand and become formal) and provide income for those with little qualifications, allowing residents to be self-supporting.

Social Inequality

Source: rismedia.com

As **inequality of wealth** increases, there may be physical isolation of groups of people. Gated communities isolate the wealthy from the rest of the urban population. They provide **privacy** and **pleasant environments** for the residents, but some argue that gated communities create division within the city.

Pros of Gated Communities	Cons of Gated Communities
- **Improved security** for residents, as only residents and guests can get access by security or through a keycard system. - Reduced **traffic** passing through the community, reducing **noise and air pollution**. - The community may have **communal facilities** such as a pool or a tennis court, providing a higher quality of life for residents.	- Properties within a gated community tend to be **more expensive** than most urban properties, so are only available to high income individuals. - Despite the additional security, homes may still become a **target for crime**. Since communities are spread out and many residents work through the day, gated communities may be quiet and lack 'neighbourhood watch'.

Transport within Urban Areas

As the urban population increases, the **pressure on roads** increases. With increasing **economic affluence**, more residents can afford a vehicle which contributes to large **congestion** and increasing **air pollution**. Air pollution can have massive impacts for **wellbeing** and residents' health.

The rise of **automated car manufacturing** has reduced the time taken and the cost to produce vehicles, and so owning your own vehicle has become more affordable through **industrialisation**.

Problems with Congestion

There can be a number of problems caused by **increasing traffic**, for both the environment and the population living in the vicinity. Vehicles - cars, motorbikes, buses, trains - all produce **emissions**:

- **Carbon Dioxide** - from burning diesel/ petrol. CO_2 is a greenhouse gas, therefore contributes to the Enhanced Greenhouse Effect.
- **Nitrogen Dioxide** - When the engine is hot, nitrogen from the air fuses with oxygen. NO_2 contributes to respiratory conditions, contributing to the death of 23,500 UK residents each year.

- **Particulates** - Fine particles left from combustion are expelled from the car, which can aggravate respiratory conditions. Filters are available to reduce particulate emissions.

Air Pollution Across The World

Overall, most countries suffer from air pollution, especially in the cities. Both developed and developing countries can equally suffer from air pollution:

Developing Countries:	Developed Countries:
Rising middle class in developing nations means more residents can afford a cheap motorbike or small car, often highly polluting. Residents of slums and low-income families will walk or ride a bike between places as they **cannot afford** public transport or owning their own vehicle.	Most residents can afford their **own vehicles** or **public transport tickets**, therefore there is a large volume of vehicles on the road. **Commuting** has become more popular as more people live in the suburbs and travel into the city for work.

Air pollution can be measured by taking readings of particulates and emissions in the air. There are also **indirect measures** of air pollution:
- **Lichen growth** - The type and volume of lichen growing correlates to the quality of air (Further Reading on lichens)
- **Respiratory health** in local population - The more conditions present in the population (asthma, bronchitis, lung cancer), the poorer the air quality is.

Plotting the air quality for each country, it is easy to identify **countries of high pollution**: India, China, South Korea. Individual **cities** may also have poor air quality: New York (USA), Quorveh (Iran), Lombardia (Italy), Tokyo (Japan). Source: http://waqi.info/

Strategies to Improve Air Quality
To reduce congestion and the emissions produced by vehicles, governments may choose to construct a **major infrastructure project**. Infrastructure projects are generally very **expensive** and so require **government funding**.

Benefits of Infrastructure Regeneration	Risks/Costs of Infrastructure Regeneration
- High volume of jobs created, especially in construction. - Improving transport links can improve migration and trade links, which in turn can increase economic productivity.	- Some large-scale projects can be risky to agree to, as their cost can increase with inflation or changing circumstances (the price of supplies may change since original planning) - Often, infrastructure projects aren't sustainable due to the large volumes of concrete used (large CO_2 output)

Alternatively, governments may try to reduce car usage by a variety of strategies:

➔ **Congestion Charging** - in the centre of towns and cities, vehicles must pay a charge (£11.50 per day) to drive within. This may be due to heavy traffic through this area. This has been successful in reducing traffic through central London, but has yet to be introduced in other UK cities.
➔ **Pedestrianisation** - The flow of traffic through busy shopping roads or outside popular tourist attractions is severely restricted. Roads become paved, with the addition of permanent flowers and trees, which makes the area more attractive.
➔ **Park and Ride** - Especially in cities with restricted parking available, park and ride schemes have been introduced. Car parks are built in the suburbs or abandoned inner city (where there is a lot of available, cheap land) and bus services are run between the car park and city centre. This approach has been adopted by many towns and cities across the UK.
➔ **No-drive Days** - In Mexico (known as Hoy No Circula), some vehicles are not allowed to be driven within Mexico City through winter. There are no such schemes in the UK.

These schemes can successfully reduce car traffic through the **city centre**, and so reduce air pollution and improve the wellbeing of local residents. However, **congestion problems still exist** and some of these schemes don't reduce car usage, instead just displacing traffic outside the centre.

Public Housing

Public housing (also known as social housing) was first constructed during the **Industrial Revolution** but became more widespread during the country's reconstruction following **World War 2**.

The quality of social housing provided varies from country to country. Social housing tends to be limited due to **affordability, availability or quality**:

● In developed countries (especially **Welfare States**), social housing has been successful with many families applying for houses. Social housing is run by **local housing authorities**, which regulates the quality of homes and provides on-call assistance. However, there is a **limited supply** of these houses.
● In emerging countries, some governments are increasing the supply of public housing through construction. Many countries aim to **replace informal slums** with permanent residence with infrastructure and electricity installed. Often, social housing projects in emerging countries prioritise the **volume** of houses over the quality of homes.

Often, it is **NGOs** that lead efforts to improve housing and living conditions. However, their effort will be limited by **funds**.

Ideal Cities

An **ideal city** is an urban region where the population are **content and well**, there are jobs and **economic security** and **environmental sustainability**. However, very few cities in the world can be considered ideal cities.

There are many different ideas of what an ideal city should look like and contain. There has been developing ideas of how to structure cities in the UK for the last century:

1. **Garden Cities** were thought up in 1898 by Sir Ebenezer Howard. The principle was to plan and construct residential areas surrounded by a **green belt**. Garden cities would **restrict urban sprawl** of cities, since sections of the city could not expand into the greenbelt

surrounding it. However, housing could become **unaffordable** for the **working population**. Only the middle and upper class could benefit from garden cities and the improved living conditions they brought. There were only ever two garden cities constructed in the UK: **Letchworth & Welwyn** in Hertfordshire.

2. Following **WW2**, the UK government began building **New Towns** to reduce overcrowding in major cities. The government portioned off land around the UK for the construction of self-sufficient communities. These towns include: Milton Keynes, Crawley, Livingston, Telford, etc.

3. Governments may also construct **New Capital Cities**, moving government power into less crowded-cities or purpose-built new cities. Despite the large financial (and risk of political) cost, several different countries have new capital cities, for a variety of reasons:
   a. **Nigeria** moved its capital from Lagos to **Abuja**, to relieve congestion and overcrowding in Lagos.
   b. **Brazil** moved its capital city from Rio de Janeiro to **Brasilia**, to encourage inland growth and reduce vulnerability to attacks by the sea.
   c. **Egypt** has proposed to construct a new capital, east of **Cairo**. It will house all financial and government powers, as well as international embassies. This is because Cairo is one of the most densely populated urban cities in the world, with a population of 20 million.

Eco-Cities

Eco-cities are the most popular attempt at an ideal city. The aim is to become **sustainable** (environmentally, socially and economically) and **reduce the ecological footprint** of its residents.

There are many approaches to developing an eco-city, including:

➔ **Reduce vehicle emissions**
➔ **Food and Water Security**
➔ **Appropriate waste disposal**
➔ **Construct eco houses** - BedZed in Beddington, Sutton, is a successful example of the construction of eco houses. Features include:
   ◆ All materials for construction are recycled, responsibly-sourced and sometimes locally produced.
   ◆ Houses are south-facing and use solar panels to produce electricity and heating. Extra power is generated using biomass generators on site.
   ◆ Residents use a car pool or are encouraged to use public transport.
   ◆ Housing is a mixture of types of tenures and sizes, to accommodate for different resident's needs. A portion of houses are affordable or social housing.

Urban Regeneration

There are many strategies to improve a location through regeneration. A regeneration project can focus on **constructing infrastructure**, developing existing and new **housing**, **encouraging investment** etc.

There are many stakeholders that must be involved in any projects:

· **Local businesses** - The construction process may restrict industry productivity for local businesses, such as reduced footfall past a shop, isolated business if the roads surrounding are

temporarily closed, loss of custom due to noisy, unattractive surroundings. It is important that the economy does not decline during regeneration.

- **Residents** - Are there existing strains on services, resources and the roads? If so, attracting more people to the area may exacerbate the problems. Residents are likely to approve city centre improvements and improving services/ employment opportunities. However, residents can be NIMBYs (*Not in My Back Yard)* and oppose the loss of greenfield land, new housing construction or attracting large-scale industry.
- **Planners** - The planners must compare present and future demands, especially as the population continues to grow. Often, the planners are contracted to the local government or by the private business leading the project, and so must balance public, private and governmental opinions.

Housing - Suburban New-Builds

With a **rising population**, the **demand** for housing is increasing beyond the supply of houses for sale or rent. There is **inequality in opportunities** to access housing and a limited supply of social and affordable housing despite a growing proportion of the population who need it. This is due to:

- **Lack of social housing** - As renting private housing is often unaffordable for low income individuals or families, the government is spending billions each year on housing benefits. However, they need to instead spend money on constructing more social housing to meet the demand of applicants.
- Large numbers of **empty, derelict properties** - especially in the inner city, where brownfield land is more expensive to develop than greenfield.
- **Overseas investors** buying properties in the UK has seen **house prices rise**. Investor visas attract wealthy individuals who can afford multiple high value properties in elite locations. Many properties are left empty or are rented out.
- Increasing numbers of affluent people have bought second properties to rent out as an investment. This increase in **buy-to-let** properties has reduced the number of properties available to buy which has **increased property prices** and also the price of rent.

There has been **recent frameworks** developed by the government to increase supply, setting a target number of houses for local councils to provide. This has seen **rapid new-build developments** in the aim of regenerating sub-urban towns to encourage migration and economic growth:

- Often in the **suburbs** of towns and cities, due to large, cheap expanse of land available whilst in close proximity to the job opportunities in the city centre.
- Developers are obliged to provide a **variety of houses**, so these developments contain a mix of properties to buy, rent or shared-ownership of a variety of sizes.
- These new large estates provide a large volume of new houses, but often don't build new services or facilities for this new settlement (e.g. grocers, doctors, etc). This can put **stress on existing services** - such as schools - who must try to cater for an influx of schoolchildren to educate.
- There is heavy criticism about the development's **sustainability** - habitat loss and environmental degradation of greenfield land, air and noise pollution for locals by lorries, encouraging outward migration from rural regions to suburbs.

Housing - Gentrification in the Inner City

In recent years, the benefits of **gentrification** and **high-value properties** has encouraged more inner-city development projects by constructors. The high cost of clearing and preparing **brownfield sites** (land already used for residential or industrial purposes) can be compensated by building high-value apartments.

Benefits of Gentrification	Risks/Costs of Gentrification
- Potential economic growth as the wealth of a few trickles down into the local society. - Improved surroundings and new facilities may be constructed, which can benefit all.	- Lack of variety of housing - all high-value apartments - so gentrification schemes won't benefit first-time buyers or families. - Often, gentrification schemes don't build any social housing, so there is still a shortage in supply.

Industrial Regeneration - Retail, Leisure & Tourism

Some of the most successful regeneration projects have focused on the **rebranding** or development of **culture** in the UK. For example:

- The regeneration of East London in the aim of hosting the international Olympics and Paralympics, creating high quality **sports facilities**.
- Many retail parks are built on **disused industrial land**, such as the Trafford Centre (Manchester), Salford Quays or Liverpool Water.

Benefits of Cultural Regeneration	Risks/Costs of Cultural Regeneration
- Most projects use disused industrial brownfield land, which is sustainable. - Retail and cultural projects can benefit all - increased local facilities, rising local reputation, new job opportunities, celebration of different faiths.	- Due to the scale of some projects (trying to improve the entire city of Belfast, for example), improvements may be long-term and not immediately benefit the locals.

Rebranding & Reimaging

Rebranding involves developing a location's image and reputation, to try to attract a particular target population or investment. **Reimaging** is the positive improvement of a location's existing reputation. Rebranding & reimaging are needed in cities with **declining retail or businesses** in the city centre.

There are different ways and strategies to rebrand & reimage:

- **Advertising Campaign** - often aimed at tourists, showcasing the lifestyle and attraction of visiting the place. Successful campaigns include: Australia, Dubai and Iceland.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE AUSTRALIA

- **Hosting Events** - Often, holding international events such as the Olympics, music festivals or international conferences can improve a country's reputation and act as a catalyst for further change and development. Brazil had to reimage itself to host the 2016 Olympics, since Brazil had a reputation for being unsafe. Since the Olympics, the Brazilian government has developed and improved the living conditions in its Favelas.
- **Focussing on Industry** - Some countries focus on developing their reputation to become a technological hub. This may be through constructing industry and science parks, developing their education to provide a highly-skilled workforce or attract a major TNC to relocate here.

Sustainable Urban Regeneration

Urban Regeneration projects are - on average - becoming more focussed on **sustainability**:

➔ Reducing the **environmental degradation** during construction
 ◆ air pollution
 ◆ greenhouse emissions
 ◆ noise pollution
 ◆ longevity of resources used
➔ **Social sustainability** includes:
 ◆ Offering a range of house sizes and tenures, to accommodate a range of incomes and needs.
 ◆ Local employment opportunities
 ◆ Construction of street lighting and limited use of alleys to reduce anti-social behaviour
➔ **Community identity** is positive, so migrants and businesses are **attracted** to the area. A variety of factors affect a community's identity: low unemployment rates, attractive living environment, good logistical and communication connections, profitable market available.
➔ The local population is **fairly represented** at their local and national governments. There is **little inequality** in power within the community and views are heard regularly from residents.