

# **Edexcel Geography GCSE**

## Challenges of an Urbanising World Detailed Notes

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## What is an Urban Area?

The world can be divided into **rural** and **urban** areas:



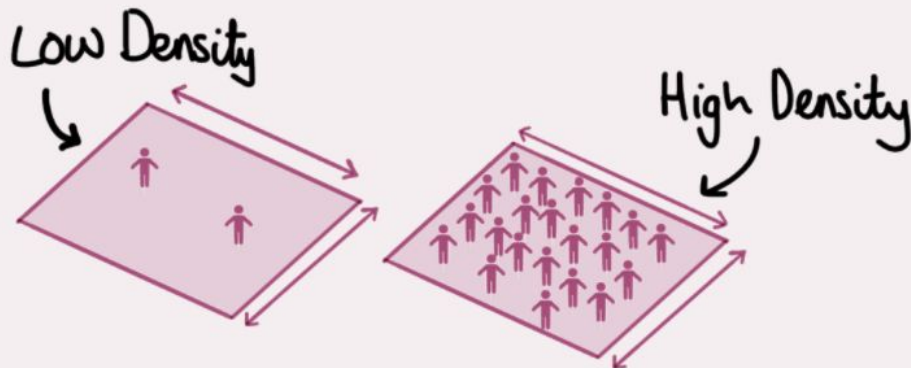
Rural areas tend to have a **small population density** and large proportion of open, green spaces. Rural people may work in agriculture, tourism or running shops in the local village.



Urban areas tend to be towns and cities, with **large population density** and limited open, green spaces. Urban residents tend to work in offices, factories or running services in the city.

### Topic Recap: Population Density

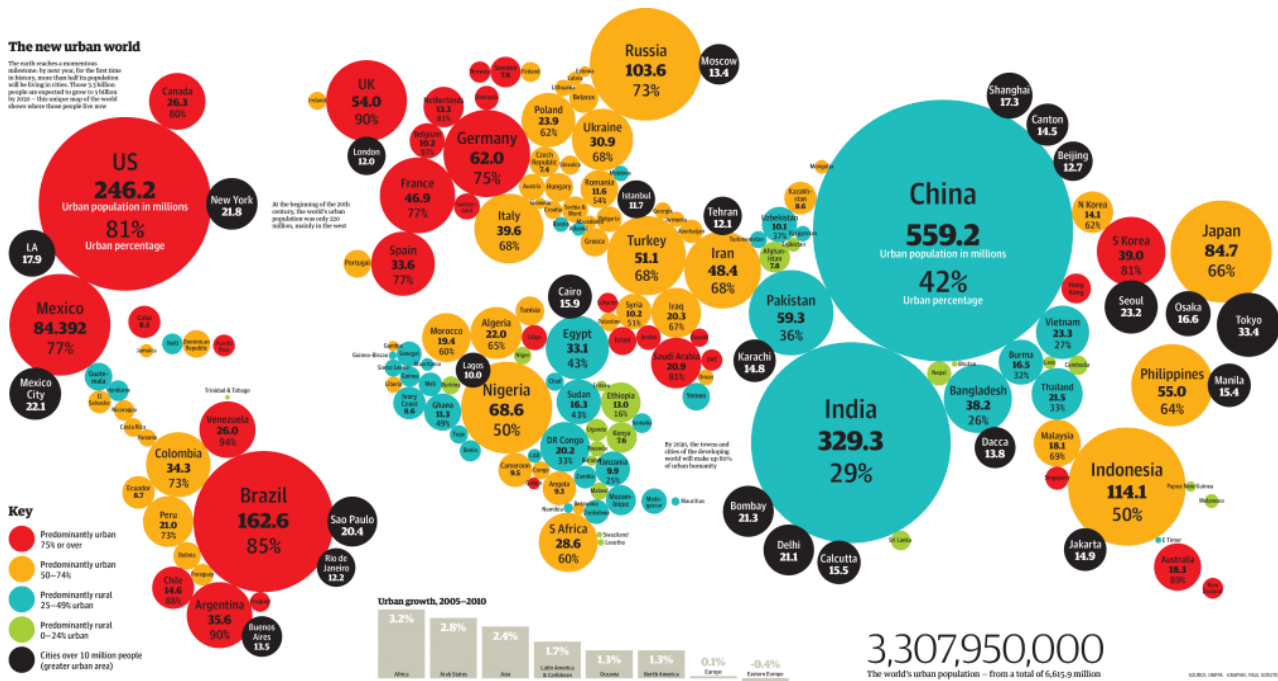
Population density is a measure of how spread out the population is. For example, for the same square of land, how many people live in each region?



Both low density and high density areas face their own problems. Regions with high population density are at more risk from disease and the large number of people living there can cause a greater pressure on resources such as internet, electricity and water. Think about how your internet speed becomes slower with more people in the house - this is the same for water supplies, food and electricity! Areas with low population densities can face similar issues with resources but the problems they face are usually due to access and the difficulty providing the resources to remote locations.



More of the world's population is living in urban areas - cities are **expanding** and the urban population is growing. The **infographic** (a diagram which represents statistics) below shows each country's **urban population**, in millions, and the **percentage** of their entire population that live in urban rather than rural.

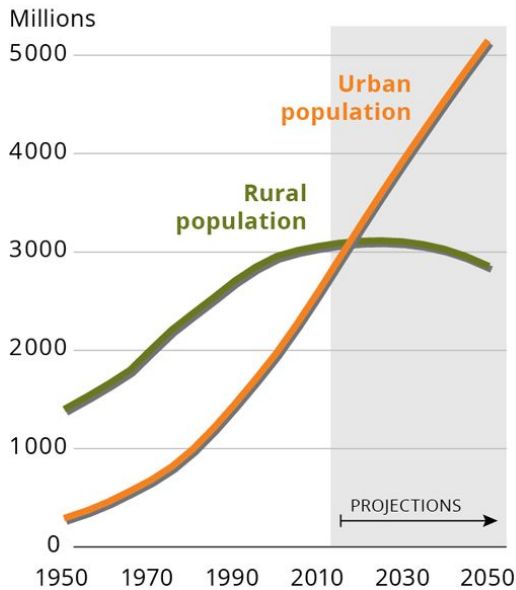


Many **MICs** have large urban populations; **81%** of the US's population live in urban towns and cities. whereas **90%** of the UK's population live in urban areas. In comparison, in **LICs** and **developing countries** over half of the population live in urban areas; for example, Turkey has **68%** of its population living in urban areas. This is less than in MICs, but these urban populations are rapidly growing.

However, just because a country has a small proportion of people living in urban areas doesn't mean their population is small. Have a look at **India** - only **29%** of India's population live in urban towns and cities, however India has two **megacities** that each have a population of 21 million - which is the same as Sri Lanka's entire population!

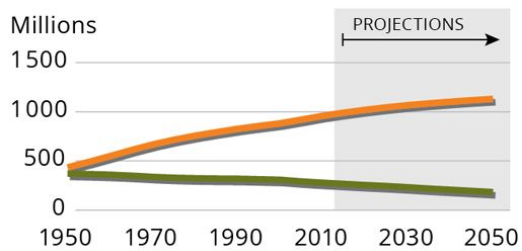
### Less developed regions

Africa, Asia (excluding Japan), Latin America and the Caribbean, Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia.



### More developed regions

Europe, Northern America, Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

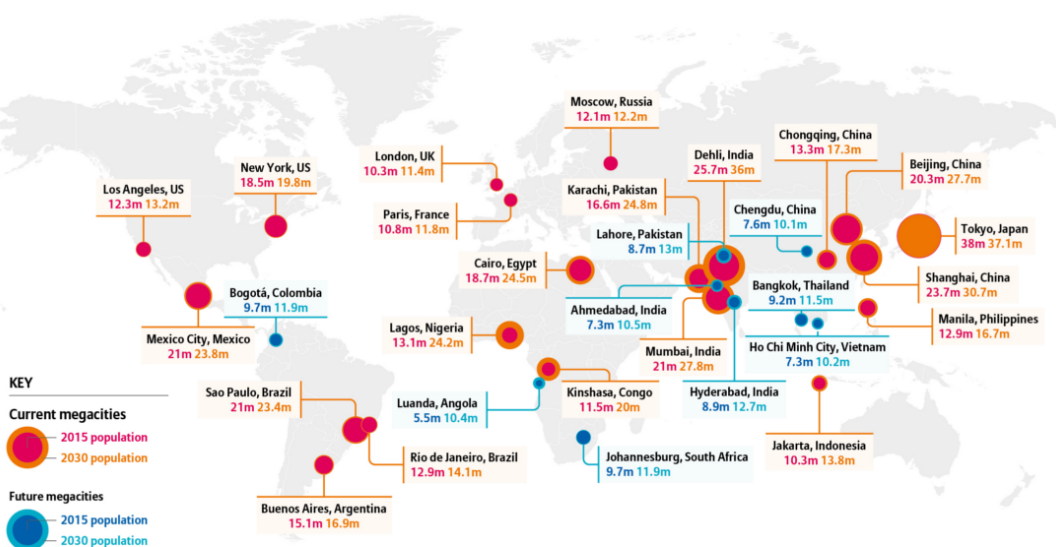


The world's **urban population** is **growing**, and will continue to grow in the future. Urban cities will grow at an **accelerated rate** in developing countries, whereas the urban population in developed cities will grow more **gradually**.

### Megacities

**Megacities** are defined as cities with populations over **10 million people**. This is larger than some countries' entire population: Greece, Sweden, Israel, New Zealand, etc.

**Figure 1** Selected current and future megacities 2015 to 2030



Source: World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision





Megacities can be found across the world but are especially concentrated in **South Asia**. Some megacities **steadily grow**, so their infrastructure - water supplies, food, doctors, schools - can cope with the population growth and there is **little inequality**. This is the case for Tokyo and Los Angeles.



Tokyo, Source: Architectural Digest



Los Angeles, Source: Business Insider

However, some megacities have **rapidly expanded**. Sometimes, this means that not all the residents can be looked after and the infrastructure is under **high pressure**. This leads to **inequalities**, where some residents live in luxury apartments whereas others live in **squatter settlements**. For example, Mumbai and Mexico City are rapidly growing megacities.



Mexico City, Source: Thousand Wonders



Mumbai, Source: Money Control



## World Cities

Some cities have global influence, even if their urban population isn't as large as a megacity. These cities are called world cities and they demonstrate their influence in a number of ways:

- **Political Decisions** - Leaders of world cities make decisions that can impact other areas of the world. Whether that is being **allied** to another country or adopting more sustainable policies, many governments follow the example of these cities.
- **Migration and Travel** - World cities tend to have **large international airports** that see many tourists, business people and migrants passing through. Cities that are common 'stop-off' points or transfers for **long haul** flights are important international airports, such as Dubai and Singapore.



Source: Travel Daily Media

- **Businesses** - A city can be a hub for local and international businesses. **Trans-national companies** (TNCs) want to have their headquarters in world cities, as they are more easily connected to the rest of the world and the reputation of having their **headquarters** in a world city adds to their brand. Headquarters of financial companies, banks and technology firms are especially **reputable** - cities want the best businesses to locate their offices here!

## Urban Economies

**Economies** in cities and towns can be the driving factor for change; declining economies need government **intervention** whereas growing economies attract attention, **migration** and investment.

Developing and developed countries have different **characteristics** to their economies, these characteristics are based upon the kind of work their population does. For instance, **developed countries** tend to have a large proportion of **formal workers**, where workers have contracts. Whereas **developing countries** have a large proportion of **informal workers**, who find their own work or are self-employed. There are pros and cons to formal and informal work:

### Formal Work

Workers agree to a **contract** with their employer, which in most instances ensures a **regular wage** and **safe working conditions**. Formal work includes:

- Teachers
- Doctors and Dentists
- Office workers (IT, Managers, etc)

In the UK, for example, employers are **responsible** for the safety and welfare of their workers. Employees should receive **PPE** and training to do their job safely. Due to **unions** and the advent of workers' rights, employees are guaranteed certain levels of pay, contracts, holiday and sick pay, flexible working and parental rights.

However, formal work is **competitive** and often requires the correct **qualifications** for the job. Therefore, workers who don't have a degree/formal qualification or the appropriate experience won't



get the job. In addition, formal work often doesn't give **flexibility** with hours and time off for holidays is limited.

## Informal Work

Informal work includes any job that is **temporary**, with **limited regulations** or **self-employed** jobs. Informal work includes:

- Street Sellers
- House Help and Cleaners
- Rag Picker

Whatever an informal worker earns, they get to keep. So the amount of hours they work will reflect how much they earn. However, their wage isn't **guaranteed** and so they could have days where they don't earn a penny. There is **no contract**, so workers are vulnerable to **exploitation**: businesses don't protect their workers' health, **overwork** them or send them more dangerous work. Informal workers don't pay the correct amount of **tax**, if any, so the government cannot benefit from their work.

## Changing Urban Populations

Urban cities can change shape and characteristics. Over time, all cities will **grow and decline** for a variety of reasons. Often, the city depends on **net migration** and the distance **commuters** will travel to work in the city.

## Rural-Urban Migration

Most urban cities around the world are growing. This may be because the **population** on a whole is growing as the global **birth rate** is higher than the global **death rate** (more people are being born than dying). This is because:

- **Healthcare** and medical knowledge is improving, especially in LICs.
- Many countries, especially in South Asia, have built better warning systems for **natural disasters**, so fewer lives are lost.
- Better knowledge of **midwifery**, which reduces pregnancy fatalities, and **government policies** that allow time off and better care in workplaces for pregnant women.

In addition, urban populations are growing more rapidly than rural populations. This is because some rural workers **migrate** to an urban city for work opportunities and a **better quality of life**. This is called **rural-urban migration**. An individual might feel pushed from their rural home and pulled towards living in an urban city, through **push and pull factors**:





### PUSH

- Rural jobs are mainly in **farming**. This is **intensive** work and not well paid.
- **Climate change** is making farming more difficult. The soil is becoming poorer quality (through **desertification**) and **droughts** are more common, leading to frequent **crop failures**.
- In rural towns and villages, **access to services** is limited. Families may have to travel far to their local hospital or school.
- Rural towns tend to be **isolated** because they are far away from a nearby city. This means electricity, water and food supplies are limited and the town must rely on themselves rather than import supplies in.



### PULL

- In the city, there are **higher paid jobs** and more opportunities, since there are many more businesses located here.
- Better **education** for children, as many colleges and universities are located in cities rather than rural villages.
- **Public transport** allows residents to be more mobile, even if they can't afford a car!
- Residents don't need to travel as far for **hospitals** and **medical care**.
- City life is more **entertaining**, with more shops, cinemas, clubs and restaurants than in rural villages.

However, not all pull factors are as they seem. People can decide to migrate based on a **dream** or **reputation**. Sometimes, when they arrive in the city, the reasons that they moved away from home for aren't true.

## Suburbanisation

As the city builds, some residents would prefer a **quieter quality of life**. For example, individuals may want to move away from the city centre and towards the **suburbs** of the city.



### Reasons to move to the suburbs:

- Less traffic **congestion**, so quieter lifestyle
- More **land** per house, so houses have gardens, larger rooms and spare bedrooms
- Can afford a **car**
- Lower **crime rate**, making it safer to raise families in the suburbs
- More **leisure** facilities and green open spaces

Governments can encourage **suburbanisation** by building new **transport links** to the periphery of the city, as well as allowing new **housing developments** on greenfield land surrounding the city. However, suburbanisation increases the size of the city and could become **too sprawling** with too little services and facilities, which would impact the **quality of life** for residents. For example, if

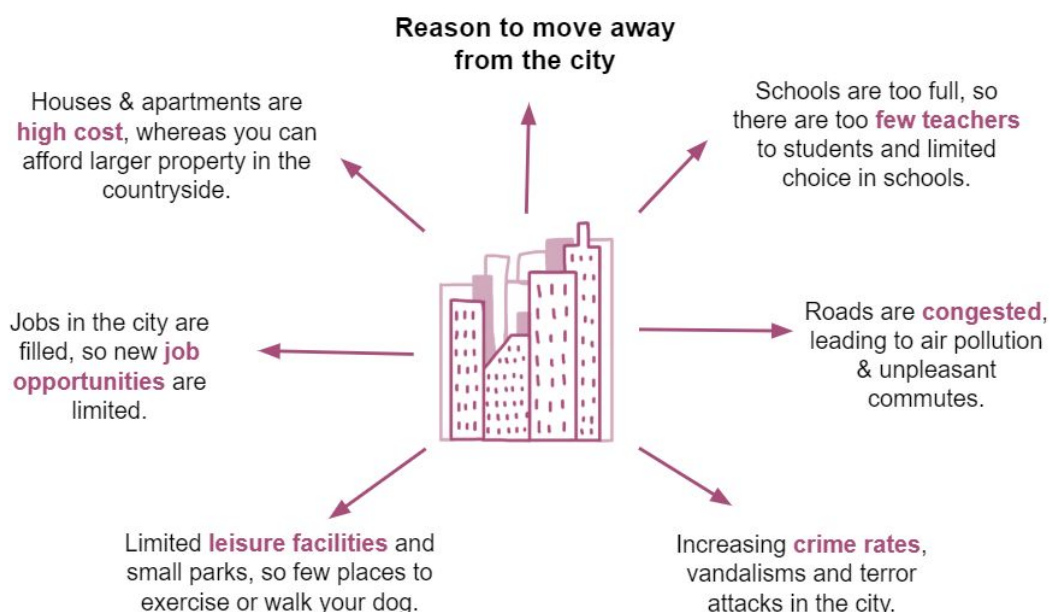




builders construct more houses but not more doctors' surgeries, residents will have poor access to medical care which could impact their health and life expectancy.

## Counter Urbanisation

If a city becomes **too large** and has too many **problems**, residents may want to move away from the city. This is the opposite to urbanisation (where people want to move into the city), which is why we call it **counter-urbanisation**.



## Deindustrialisation

Some cities can have **declining economies**, where businesses leave the city or become **bankrupt**. This can have an impact on everyone's lives in the city:

- Workers can **lose their jobs** if the business is moving far out of town. The higher the levels of **unemployment**, the more competitive getting a new job is and the less job opportunities are available.
- If a household loses their income, they may be unable to afford **commodities** such as going out to the restaurant or buying new clothes. Therefore local businesses lose **profit** and could close which would lead to **further unemployment**.
- In the worst cases, if a household loses their income the family could be left without food or **evicted** from their homes. **Homelessness** will increase.

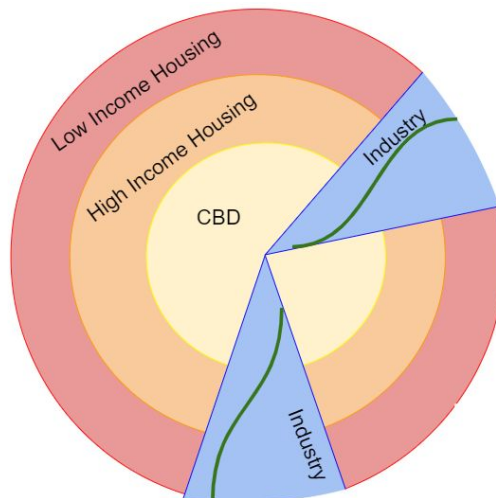
**Deindustrialisation** can damage the quality of life and the **reputation** of a city. This may be because of the high **unemployment**, **dereliction** of old industry buildings or rising levels of **crime** in the city. Deindustrialisation has greatly impacted the city of **Detroit, USA**. Here, the murder rate is four times higher than New York and an employment rate that peaks at 32% of its population being unemployed.



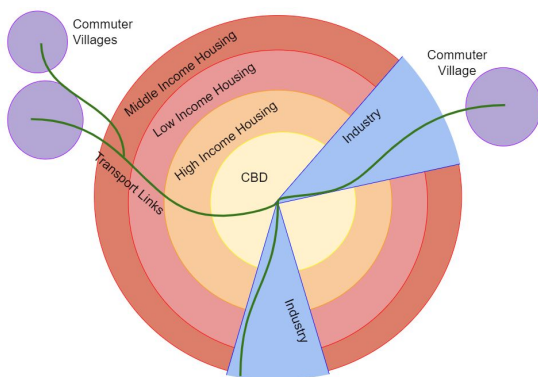
## Urban Land Use

Cities tend to follow a pattern of **similar structures**. Land in the city is used for different purposes - **residential, industrial or commercial** - which depends on the characteristics of the land.

Cities look like **tree rings**, with the oldest buildings in the centre and the youngest buildings on the outside (**periphery**). Industry form small wedges, spanning the centre of the city to the periphery, alongside major **transport** links - motorways, trainlines, canals for shipping.



- The centre of any city is called the **central business district** (CBD) which is the location for many shops, restaurants, tourist attractions and office blocks. Most workers in the city have jobs in the centre of the city, and will **commute** from anywhere across the city to the centre each day.
- The most **expensive** houses tend to be found in the nearest ring to the CBD. This used to be the oldest housing estates, but many become **derelict** and replaced with new building developments. These **new apartments** are constructed to attract **high-income investors** and business managers, who want to be close to work and enjoy the city lifestyle.
- **Low income** families can't afford to live in the centre of the city, so they tend to live towards the periphery. They must **commute** into the city for work and shops, but the house prices are cheaper and there is better access to schools and supermarkets around the periphery of the city.

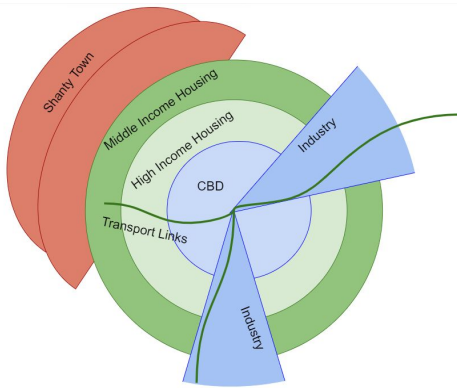


However, this is a simplified model of the city. In fact, some cities can look more complicated than this model:

In **developed** cities, housing developments around the periphery become attractive for **middle income** families. This is because land is cheaper on the periphery, houses can be larger but workers can still commute to work in the city centre.

In addition, **commuter villages** can become linked with the city, offering a quieter quality of life for those who can afford a car to commute into town.





In **developing cities**, the structure of the city is rearranged. The poorest families live on the very **periphery** of the city, often on **unfavourable land** (steep hills, next to railways, etc) in **shanty towns**.

Transport doesn't reach the periphery of the city, so the **shanty town** residents cannot commute easily into the city centre and often have to **walk** early in the morning.

