

## Topic: Changing Places

### 3.2.2.2 Relationships and connections

<b>What you need to know</b>
How demographic, socio-economic and cultural characteristics or places are shaped by shifting flows (of people, resources, money and ideas)
The impacts of external forces, including (a) government policies, (b) multinationals, or (c) international or global institutions on the nature of places
How past and present connections shape places
How the above processes affect changing demographic and cultural characteristics OR economic change and social inequalities

#### **Intro:**

The demographic, socio-economic and cultural character of places are shaped by shifting flows of people, resources, money and investment, and ideas at all scales from local to global.

#### **Shifting flows of resources, money and investment**

- Global shift is a consequence of globalisation and the increase of foreign direct investment by transnational corporation (or multinationals) in newly industrialising countries (NICs – these include the Asian Tigers – South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong, which started industrialising in the 1960s – and China and India) and recently industrialising countries (RICs – these include the Philippines, Indonesia and Cambodia; countries which began industrialising in the 1980s).
- Global shift means an increase in proportion of global manufacturing carried out in NICs and RICs in the last 30 years. The majority of this is happening in Asia.
- Global shift has led to deindustrialisation in key industrial areas in the UK (South Wales, for example) and has had a profound effect on the demographic, cultural and socio-economic character of these areas.
- Some of the negative effects of global shift on areas experiencing deindustrialisation include:
  - Structural unemployment among industrial workers
  - Widening socio-economic inequality between skilled and unskilled workers – particularly when retraining is unsuccessful
  - Out-migration of younger, skilled workers to find jobs elsewhere
  - Negative multiplier effect in regions affected (a negative ‘snowballing’ of economic activity) with the closure of retail and leisure opportunities
- Some of the positive effects of global shift on areas experiencing deindustrialisation include:
  - Cheaper imports of manufactured goods which can keep the cost of living down
  - Retraining opportunities for workers in higher wage industries

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- More efficient industries which remain, which could lead to economic growth and job creation

These shifting flows of resources, money and investment can also be seen in London Docklands and the North East, particularly around the River Tyne. In London Docklands, economic restructuring has seen a shift towards a commercial and financial function since the 1980s. The demographic and cultural characteristics of the area have changed completely (from dock workers and their families to city workers and 'gated communities'). This has resulted in widening social inequalities between 'old' residents and 'new' residents.

In the North East, the collapse of the shipbuilding industry in the 1980s resulted in a sharp rise in structural unemployment and social deprivation. However, inward investment from the EU, the British government and multinationals, such as Nissan which opened a car factory in Sunderland in 1984, has reduced social inequality in the region.

#### **Shifting flows of people**

In-migration into an area leads to changing demographic and cultural characteristics, sometimes over a short period of time. Examples include:

The accession of eight eastern European countries to the EU since 2004 (including Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic) have led to parts of Britain experiencing an increase in proportion of foreign-born residents. This has led to dynamic social characteristics such as changes in employment patterns, retail trends and public services allocation.

London has been affected by waves of migration for centuries. In the south western suburbs of the city:

- Tooting has seen in-flows of Irish migrants and more recently, since the 1960s, migrants from India and Pakistan.
- Brixton has been the focus for migration from the Caribbean since the post-war period of the 1950s.
- Stockwell has become a destination for Portuguese-speaking migrants since the 1990s.
- Wimbledon and Earlsfield have both experienced large numbers of migrants from Australia and New Zealand since the 1990s.
- Woking has been the recipient of migrants from Pakistan for over a century (Britain's first mosque – the Shah Jahan Mosque – was built there in 1898).

All these flows of people have influenced the areas' demographic and cultural characteristics as well as leading to economic change and some social inequality.

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#### **Spatial scales of change**

The characteristics and impacts of external forces operating at different scales from local to global, including either government policies or the decisions of multinational corporations or the impacts of international or global institutions.

#### **International scale**

- Investment by multinational corporations has a profound effect on both demographic and cultural characteristics of an area and on economic change and social inequality.
- The energy industry in the UK has attracted inward investment from the French company EDF and China General Nuclear Power Corporation, who will build a new nuclear power station at Hinckley Point in Somerset. The project has the potential to create highly skilled jobs which will reduce social inequality and potentially change demographic characteristics if highly qualified employees are attracted to the area.
- In hi-tech industry, Apple announced in May 2016 the opening of a new development centre in Hyderabad, India. The investment from a multinational as influential as Apple has the potential to change demographic and economic patterns significantly in the area, although it is likely to compound pre-existing social inequalities between urban and rural areas in India. Similar patterns are emerging in China, where most foreign direct investment (FDI) in the form of manufacturing development is focused on urban areas.

#### **National scale**

British government policy to reduce social and economic inequality focuses on five key areas:

- Taxation – the redistribution of income and business tax towards poorer members of society.
- Subsidies – for example, free school meals, winter fuel allowance for pensioners and income support.
- Planning – priority is given to upgrading housing and services in the most deprived areas.
- Law – equal opportunities are protected by law, as is the minimum wage.
- Education – training is given to vulnerable members of society in order to raise skills levels and qualifications, enabling them to gain employment.

In addition, the government has invested in areas of high deprivation in order to drive economic growth and reduce inequality. The DVLA is located in Swansea and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) moved from London to Newport, Wales in 2007. The government has also sought to devolve more decision-making powers to local authorities since 2010 in order to target public spending where it is most needed.

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#### Regional scale

There are many examples of external forces operating at a regional scale in order to address economic imbalance. These often have an effect on the demographic and cultural characteristics of a place.

- The Northern Powerhouse was first proposed by the British government in 2014 as a way to turn the north of the country into a collective economic force to rival the concentration of wealth in the south. The initiative centres on Manchester but has regional hubs in Leeds, Liverpool, Bradford and Newcastle.
- The BBC moved several key departments to Salford Quays in 2011 and this was thought to be a key part of the Northern Powerhouse project. The migration of staff from London to MediaCityUK was the catalyst for economic and demographic change in the area and dozens of digital firms - and the University of Salford - have subsequently set up nearby.
- This has reinvigorated the regional economy and resulted in some significant cultural changes. The Imperial War Museum North, the Lowry (theatre and art gallery) and several shopping centres opened before MediaCityUK (in 2002 and 2000 respectively) but have further cemented the area's reputation as a centre for culture and the arts.

#### **How past and present connections, within and beyond localities, shape places and embed them in the regional, national, international and global scales.**

Past and present connections are often clear to see in the urban landscape of places. The architecture and infrastructure of a place often reflects historical connections and can be seen in street patterns, the age of buildings and road names. For many, it is important to celebrate the heritage of a place through the renovation of historic buildings and infrastructure such as canals. Much of Birmingham's early regeneration, for example, focused on the derelict canal network which runs through the city centre.

Many historic buildings perceived to have regional or national importance have been redeveloped with a change of function. This is done to boost regional economies and to embed new cultural or economic meaning to the place. The Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art along the River Tyne in Gateshead was a flour mill owned by Hovis until its closure in 1981. The mill was a prominent local landmark but since its conversion into an internationally-renowned centre for contemporary art, has contributed to the change in the demographic and cultural characteristics of the region.

Other places have chosen to celebrate past connections by commissioning new developments which have been designed using neo-classical architectural styles. The design of Richmond (upon Thames) Riverside which opened in 1987, for example, was

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based on Georgian architecture but houses modern commercial offices and many bars and restaurants.

Of course, past and present connections are not necessarily expressed in architecture or infrastructure, although it is easy to spot a modern business park on the edge of a motorway and infer that place's connections to different localities. Connections are also expressed in patterns of migration, ideas and, increasingly, through digital networks. These have profound implications for connections on a global scale and shape places in complex ways.