

Changing Places- some key definitions

People use different terms for the places we live in. Some of these key definitions are:

- **Built-up area:** defined by the 2011 census as areas of built-up land that are joined together and where the gap between the developed land is less than 200m. For example, Cardiff's built-up area includes Penarth, Pontypridd and Caerphilly.
- **City:** large settlement depending primarily on service and knowledge industries together with manufacturing. It is an aggregation of places. In 2015, UK cities made up 9% of the land area of the UK yet housed 54% of the population. 59% of jobs and 72% of the highly skilled workers live in them. 78% of new migrants live in cities. Officially, cities in the UK have been granted city status by royal charter. There are currently 69, of which 51 are in England and 6 in Wales. Some still cling to the idea that a city has to have a cathedral. However, these are historical definitions rather than definitions based on current functions, and hardly apply to many other countries.
- **City region:** area served by and functionally bound to a city and normally includes the journey to work and journey to study regions.
- **Community:** set of interacting but diverse groups of people found at a particular locality. It may be tied together by common heritage although many can be very diverse.
- **Conurbation:** urban area that has fused together over time, such as Greater Manchester or the Ruhr region of Germany. It may grow from one centre, e.g. London, or from several, e.g. the West Midlands.
- **Dispersed city:** US term used to define cities that have sprawled over a wide area, such as the spread of the San Francisco urban area around San Francisco Bay and up to 60 miles beyond into California.
- **Dormitory village** and **commuter village:** used to describe a settlement in which the population is socially urban and works in nearby urban areas. Estate agents frequently misappropriate the term to describe new developments and boost the attractiveness of neighbourhoods within cities.
- **Exurbia:** those areas beyond the urban area that house people who live in mainly rural surroundings but work in urban areas.
- **Global hubs:** large cities that are at the heart of the global economic and financial system, e.g. London, Tokyo, Shanghai, New York.
- **Hamlet:** small cluster of dwellings/farms lacking services.
- **Isolated dwellings:** single or pairs of rural dwellings, often in sparsely populated areas.
- **Locality:** descriptive term for where people live out their daily working and domestic lives. It can vary in size and geographers use the term loosely for anything from the small scale to a large urban area.

- **Megacity:** cities with very large populations, e.g. Shanghai, Tokyo, Mexico City.
- **Megalopolis:** growing together of large urban and suburban areas, e.g. Boswash, the area between Boston and Washington DC, USA.
- **Metropolitan area:** frequently used instead of conurbation.
- **Minor built-up rural area:** rural area with a main settlement of under 10,000 people.
- **Neighbourhood:** distinct and recognisable residential area that may be the location of home and its immediate environment. It can be someone else's home base and area. It is an area of similar housing, persons and lifestyles. It was used most obviously in the planning of new towns in the 1960s, having originated in the Garden City movement.
- **Primary Urban Area (PUA):** built-up area of a city that invariably extends beyond its administrative area, used in publications of www.centreforcities.org.
- **Rural settlement:** village, hamlet and/or isolated farms in the countryside formerly associated with primary employment. Most of the population of rural settlements do not work in the countryside. Rural UK is psychologically urban because the hamlets and villages contain people who may have retired from a city job, or who work in nearby urban areas. Peter Hall stated in 2014 that there are few truly rural settlements within 150 miles of London.
- **Rural-urban fringe:** dated term that refers to the immediate surroundings of an urban area, which contains elements of an urban area, such as golf courses alongside open countryside.
- **Suburb:** area of mainly residential units that has been developed around the core of a town or city. It has increasingly contained other uses, such as industry, retailing, offices, recreational buildings and public open spaces.
- **Town:** small urban area with a range of services to serve an area that may include some independent retailers, schools (sometimes secondary), post offices, banks and estate agents.
- **Village:** small rural settlement with some functions, e.g. post office, shops, public houses and a church. Population sizes vary (200-7,000 in the UK but far larger in Italy, for example).
- **World city:** broader term than global hub that refers to cities which are prominent in the operation of the world economy, e.g. Hong Kong, Singapore, Frankfurt, Paris.

All of these terms are not entirely discrete because communities and localities are embedded in suburbs of cities or in villages. They nest within larger places and give those places a *meaning* because of the combination of localities or communities.