

A-Level Geography Resource Package

[Human >> Contemporary Urban Environments >> Urban Forms >> PMWC]

What is a “Post-Modern Western City?”

The term, post-modern western city is used in 21st century geography to describe an area showing the following principle characteristics:

- **FRAGMENTATION**

- Urban form is divided between modern, old, comprehensively planned areas, presence of edge cities & settlements, suburbanization, as well as likely cultural division.

- **SERVICES ORIENTED ECONOMY**

- Greater emphasis on producer services and quaternary development, as opposed to manufacturing, traditional agriculture etc. Also presence of more domestically owned or operating bases of high-profile TNCs in various industries. NOT their factories.

- **ECLECTIC / VARIED DEVELOPMENTS, DESPATIALIZATION**

- Such as greater emphasis on luxury high rise, commercialization etc., CBD zoning (such as Canary Wharf) into certain sectors.

- **FLAGSHIP DEVELOPMENTS & / PRIVATIZATION**

- Think the ‘Burj Khalifa’ in Dubai, World Trade Centre in NYC, Sydney Opera House etc. May be controversial, highly costly or prestige public projects to boost the cultural ‘identity’ of an area. Cities are highly competitive entities.

- **ETHNIC DIVERSITY**

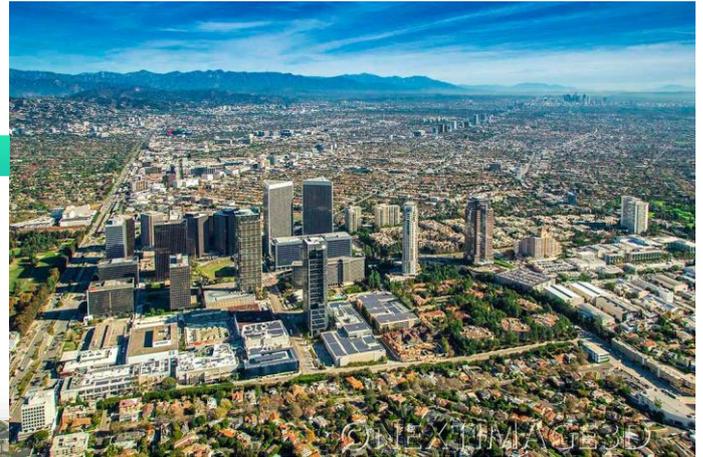
- Influxes in population due to immigration worldwide, as well as increases in populations living in divided communities or areas. Think ‘Gated’ vs. ‘Non-Gentrified.’ Also greater inequality and polarization, especially in immigration hotspots or clusters, which develop over time into unique communities with separate, often overlooked, cultures and social challenges due to their unique population ‘make up.’

!! PMWC Based 9 Mk Exemplar Answer on Sydney here: https://583daeb7-8767-411c-9387-a7803a5f9622.filesusr.com/ugd/927b29_5c88957998874394b618af5b542d3c62.pdf !!

How Can This Be Observed?

In order to showcase how a such a city forms, we will use the fantastic example of **Los Angeles**, the archetypal post-modern western city.

1. Significant citywide spatial distribution of population into different 'clusters' – presence of skyscrapers and other important buildings. Formation of edge cities, here shown 'Century City', Beverley Hills. (10 + miles from CBD proper)



2. Divided communities – those which are gated, private, exclusive, safe and sought-after, vs formerly industrial 'downtown' turned skid row. Highly dangerous and deprived area of the city. In relative proximity but completely isolated from one another. People here are often marginalised minorities who have often been 'priced out' of desirable areas in the city.

3. Presence of Commercialisation, as well as varied prestige projects – both private and public to differentiate the city and make it increasingly appealing



4. Emphasis on a tertiary 'services based' economy. LA's strength is in entertainment. These film companies have their respective HQs all in one concentrated area of the city. However, this economic success is often not passed to the most poverty-stricken in society.

