

Counter urbanization cascade



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Evans, A and Eversely, D(1980) found evidence that by 1974 the number of people who are living in rural areas was actually increasing.

Evans thinks that the reasons that made businesses choose urban regions to locate their businesses are not there any more that's why businesses and people started moving to rural areas.

Before we investigate the impact of the counter Urbanization cascading on the British economy, we start by defining urbanization and counter urbanization cascading.

Urbanization definition:

Refers to the process of increasing proportion of an entire population lives in cities and the suburbs of cities. Historically, it has been closely linked with the industrial revolution where more people started moving to the cities in order to find jobs. This has happened, when more and more sources of energy were used to enhance and increase human productivity or industrialization, surpluses increased in both agriculture and industry.

Larger and larger proportions of a population could live in cities. Economic forces were such that cities became the ideal places to locate factories and their workers.

Counter urbanization cascade definition:

We are witnessing an anti-urbanization movement at the time beings people are trying to escape from living in the centres of large cities and escaping to outside the cities, this is creating mega cities and metropolitan regions.

The reasons for counter urbanization cascade in the UK:

- 1- Regional policies enhanced the creation of job opportunities in non-urban areas, Champion, A(1989).
- 2- Retirement migration has contributed to the increase in the number of people living in non-urban areas, Champion, A(1989).
- 3- The oil shock that happened in 1973 has made the city very expensive compared to the rural areas and that's why businesses think it is cheaper to work from rural areas.

Counter urbanization Cascade trends:

Counter urbanization in the UK in the 1980s

Between 1981 and 1991, the population of the capital city of London and the metropolitan districts that surround London fell by approximately 903, 000, whilst the population of the rest of England and Wales increased by approximately 846, 000, Breheny and Rockwood (1993).

This information refers clearly to the fact that people are moving away from main cities.

Fothergill, S & Gudgin, G (1982) found that the argument which says that the south is prospering while the north is declining has lost because London has lost as many manufacturing jobs as Scotland ever had.

This big movement from cities has started after the Second World War. Rural areas and small cities have experienced the highest population increases in

percentage points and absolute terms. These changes in the number of the residents of rural areas have been accompanied by shifts in employment, retailing and economic structure but evidence suggests that the dispersal is associated with new ways of transportation such as fewer journeys by foot or bicycle and the increased reliance on private transport; people want to release themselves from the stress of travelling by tubes and buses inside big cities. Travel distance by trains in rural areas is more than 50 per cent higher than in large metropolitan areas, whilst travel distance by foot in rural areas is below half that in metropolitan areas.

Counter urbanization in the UK in the 1990s:

In the 1990s, the European and especially the British cities appear to be developing in a very complex ways, which make it harder to predict and plan urban and rural economic and social development programmers, there are contradictory and confusing results from the data that have been published by the European government.

Much of the difficulty of the data, which are related to population growth, lies in the variation of population growth in different cities and different rural regions.

Data about capital cities such as London indicate that there is continued growth of major-urban regions, particularly *around* the big cities such as London, Paris and Berlin, this expansion has been mainly caused by migration, Stillwell, J . Rees, P & Boden, P (1992)

In the UK for example, the South East is the fastest growing region in the country.

The same data also indicate that there is a major and continued geographical dispersal from the most heavily populated areas, which form the heart of these regions, including most of the capital cities such as London, Paris, Berlin, Copenhagen, with the most major counter urbanization happening where urban counter urbanization is driven by a major decline in the industrial production and the losses of major city jobs to rural areas such as Northampton.

This shift is causing a rapid increase in the size of the Greater cities such as Greater London and Greater Paris while there is a clear trend of decline in the number of white people who are living in the central parts of the city and an increase in the number of blacks and other ethnic minorities that are living in the centre of the city. Cameron, C (1980).

Change in Land use in the UK :

The counter urbanization cascade of the population and its economic activities has caused a substantial increase in pressure and urgency to develop semi-urban land. More than half of the area that the government has used in order to develop new housing projects was developed on Greenfield land in 1985. Whereas just under 40 per cent of the area of new housing was built on Greenfield land in 1994, HM government (1996).

The substantial increase in the use of Greenfield land continues to rise although it is still a smaller proportion of total land used. The use of

Greenfield land could also increase more if the supply of abandoned land or Brownfield land falls.

Government statistics show that the increase in the Greenfield land could be well beyond the government expectations because the increase in the use of Greenfield land will not be exclusively for housing; building houses will require building power stations, refineries, factories, roads and other facilities that are required in order to make life possible in the new housing centres.

The government want the number of new households to increase by 4. 4 million by 2016, HM government (1996).

The HM is addressing the problem by giving the following prediction: if we assume that 40 per cent of these newly-built houses are built on Greenfield sites at a gross density of 40 houses per hectare, 44, 000 hectares of Greenfield land will be required HM government (1996).

A similar amount of land may be required to accommodate the development of industry, commerce and transport infrastructure, HM government (1996).

Impact of land use change on the economic activity:

Meeting the needs of the British People, which have suffered from high house prices, by building new affordable houses in rural and semi-urban towns can motivate more people to move into non-urban areas, this will definitely help the non-urban areas to develop the necessary intellectual capital for development; this counter urbanization cascade could help in developing rural areas, which have suffered from prolonged economic

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decline, to balance its population imbalances and compensate for the lack of skilled labour; this type of socio-economic structural problems could be solved by redistributing the skilled labour more equally between different parts of the country;

Rural areas do not only need retired and middle age man and women, non-urban areas need also young and dynamic people who are ready to start entrepreneurial projects in order to fill the gap between the developed south and the less developed north.

We have to remember that the counter urbanization cascade entails changing the land use; the cascade from urban areas could cause the destruction of the green land if the new houses and the new economic activities were built on it.

The impact of counter urbanization cascade on the employment:

Employment in the city :

The continuing decline of the industrial sector and the rise in the service sector made the service sector dominate the economy and demand skills and expertise very different to those demanded of an industrial economy.

The service sector created jobs for highly skilled people while the industrial sector created jobs for many low skilled people.

The dilemma for the city is that the city needs highly skilled people while it is full of low skilled people who are mostly immigrants who have moved into the country recently.

The city is full of disadvantaged ethnic minorities who are vulnerable to be unemployed because of the exodus of the industry to the north of the country.

Employers are trying to concentrate their stores and offices in few places because of the high density of the population; this has led to less low-skilled job opportunities.

Employment in the non-urban areas:

The development of Internet technology made it possible for the service sector, especially the financial services sector, to relocate its operations to many rural locations.

Highly skilled labor has now greater choice in terms of workplace locations; the service sector in non-urban areas offers the opportunity to improve the quality of life of their employees who choose to live outside big cities.

The service sector in non-urban areas is providing its employees with spacious car parks, larger offices, cheaper prices and better quality of air and high standard of living

The city centre is no longer the only place where people get jobs and get their life necessities, Massey, D & Meegan, R(1982).

The employment in the non-urban areas is in increase because of the job opportunities created by the service sector and the job opportunities that are created by the move of the manufacturing sector from the south to the north.

The impact of the counter urbanization cascade on the infrastructure in the UK :

Impact on the city :

As we have said earlier, there are highly skilled jobs in the city that the disadvantaged ethnic minorities do not do for reasons related to their low-skills and racism, businesses are requiring advantaged people to commute from the suburbs of the mega cities to the centre in order to fill up these positions.

This has put strains on trains and buses; train companies have to choose between poor service and higher prices in order to improve the service.

The concentration of many people in the centre of the city has put strains on hospitals, schools, roads and parks.

The deterioration in the public services is putting more financial burden on the government.

Impact on non-urban areas :

The building of economic infrastructure in the non-urban areas is considerably high even when the general growth in the economic activity is slow, the increase in out of town development, which has resulted from the exodus of manufacturing from big cities to rural areas, has continued and caused major redistribution of work force in favour of the rural areas. Lever, W (1987)

The government is finding itself obliged to build more hospitals, schools and public transport as a result of this counter urbanization cascade from the city.

In a society where people are trying to work fewer hours, the government will find it extremely difficult to provide the infrastructure and the services that the people need to live in the new regions.

The single most important fact here is the how to predict the expansion of the metropolitan cities and the new semi-urban regions in order to start providing the infrastructure for the citizens.

Individualism and deindustrialisation:

Postindustrial thinkers argue that since the end of Second World War there has been a major shift in the values of most of the industrial world towards peaceful coexistence and understanding of the notion of the life and appreciating this virtue.

These postindustrial values of peace, freedom, creativity, coexistence, belonging, and democracy.

The old values of the past which depended on materialism and political extremism in order to control markets, occupy countries and sell products overseas has finished now and has been replaced by more noble values, embraced by dynamic populations who want to live away from the materialist values of the big cities, the people of Britain today want to live the emotional side of the live and become more passionate

This is the value of the post-industrialization in the British and the European societies,

individual preferences are the motor mechanism making for population distribution, there has been deep-rooted reversal of preferences in favour of rural over the urban Fielding, A(1982).

The other side of the argument says that the government might be right in reducing the deindustrialization in the UK because some areas are losing their ability to recreate their economic power in creating values the transition is better if it is slow, R. Martin & B Rowthorn(1986)

Economic growth and immigration:

Controlled immigration is the only way to help economic growth and social coherence in the society.

Immigration could have a positive economic impact but it may cause social unrest if immigrants did not blend into the society, P. Boyle, K. Halfacree and V. Robinson(1998)

The impact of the change in land use on the British energy sector :

Energy supply is one of the fundamental issues that determine the competitiveness of the British economy; the change in land use will change the consumption of energy in the UK. Generally, Britain is heavily dependent on fossil fuels, which are CO₂ intensive fuels and the source of these fuels is outside the UK, the increasing consumption of the fossil fuel indicates to the increasing depletion of non-renewable resources and the emissions of

greenhouse gases, which is the major pollutant associated with the combustion of fossil fuels (such as carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides). Statistics refer to the fact that the UK energy consumption per capita remained fairly constant in the last ten years, Energy consumption in the industry and commerce sectors decreased because of the contraction of the industrial activity in the UK, whilst domestic energy consumption per capita remained fairly constant. At the same time, energy consumption in the transport sector increased. The transport sector is now considered to be the largest and fastest increasing consumer of energy, this is due principally to the increase in travel distances resulting from the change in the land use in Britain, the growth in long-distance road and air transport and the decline in sustainable ways of transportation such as walking and cycling has affected the energy consumption, this has made the cost of travelling by trains very expensive.

Regarding using cars, the UK is constantly changing the legislations regarding vehicle engines in order to make them more energy-efficient by using improved fuels such as unleaded petrol, catalytic converters and higher specifications and performance which is tended to counter the fuel efficiency gains from improved engine design. These factors, together with a fall in the average numbers of passengers per car and a fall in bus use, caused a reduction in the overall fuel efficiency of long-distance road passenger transport.

The change of land use resulting from the counter urbanization cascade which is causing an increase in the usage of fossil fuels because

transportation is increasingly becoming between more distant places, this has a negative effect on the competitiveness of the British Economy.

The impact of change of land use on the composition of the labour force :

Women are finding it extremely difficult to live in crowded cities, women think that there is a continuous deterioration in the standard of life in big cities; the increasing crime in major cities is being viewed as a threatening environment to women and children. The counter urbanization cascade of workingwomen from big cities is linked to women's inability to deal with violent environment that has been caused by the inability of the citizens to live side by side with each other in urban places.

Stress also is a major driver for the counter urbanization cascade of women from big cities for example the delay that is caused by broken lifts and crowded streets is considered a major cause of women urban exodus.

Women also tend to see big cities as dirty and unhealthy; women do not like litter, cracked pavements, and polluted air.

Racism against women in big cities is a major cause of counter urbanization cascading from urban areas, the current work environment in big cities is very competitive and women are reported to be the victim of this competition, Lever, W & Bailly, A(1996).

The impact of counter urbanization on families and spatial dynamics :

The family is the basic cell in the society, the family n its own is an economy cell; in each family there are producers and consumers, having a family

could be an incentive to produce and be more productive, the deindustrialization and the preferences to live longer time without bringing children could have a negative impact on the wealth of the society if no other forms of economic growth has been enhanced Crafts, N (1993)

Counter urbanization has an impact on the family and in turn on the whole economy.

The shape of the family is more dynamic and fluid than ever before, members of the families do not live together for a long time as they used to do before

The UK has a diverse family patterns and structures,

Family life also has a strong spatial dynamics, fathers and mothers prefer to live in rural or semi-urban places once they get a job opportunity outside the city or once they retire while their children prefer to stay in the city because they do not feel the stress that the fathers and mothers feel and because they enjoy the buzz of the city.

This has a big economic impact on the economics of cities and rural areas.

Cities are getting crowded with young enthusiastic people, many of them disadvantaged those are ready to do anything possible in order to build their lives, the government is trying to help them by giving them training and social welfare. Hausner, V (1985)

Young people, which are mainly situated in the cities, can create new ideas and establish entrepreneurial projects, while in the rural and sub-urban areas

it is less likely that the middle aged people to establish such projects, Law, C M (1980)

That's explains the reason why the south east is becoming the host of many high-tech industries, Lever, W(1987)

Many parents and their children usually migrate out of London, the city of London is a net gainer of the people who are between the ages of 15-24, Stillwell, J. Rees, P & Boden, P (1992).

The break of the families put an increasing pressure on the transportation system because young people prefer to travel in the weekend and the public holidays to see their parents in the rural and semi-urban regions, this will mean building more roads and causing pollution and increase in the energy use in the country.

Conclusion: the government will have a difficult task in planning and funding new housing and new infrastructure in rural and semi-urban areas, the societies of the Western World are aging and old people prefer to live in the countryside which makes them less-productive because they do not utilise their full potential after the age of sixty although they are able to work more hours.

The government is trying to compensate that by allowing immigrants to the UK in order to work and create value, the number of immigrants to the UK is bigger than the number of new British born children, Champion, T Fotheringham, S (1998)

The government should encourage migrants to live where they can create value to the British economy; immigration has benefited Britain in creating economically active metropolitan cities such as London.

The above paragraph is based upon Goddard, J & Champion, A (1983) which has referred to the fact that many administrations are finding it difficult to finance their expenditures from the local's contributions.

This is making a skills gap in the big cities; there is more unskilled labour in the cities than skilled labour, London has lost 212, 000 jobs between 1981 and 1996 while the rest of the south east has gained 556, 000 jobs, Turok & Edge (1999).

In my opinion the government should direct the people to reside in areas that have the potential to develop because not all areas have the same chances of growth, Allen, J Massey, D, Cochrane, A , Charlesworth, J, Court, G, Henry, N and Sarre, P(1998)

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