

The view from the Chair

Viv Pointon
Chair, Post-16 and HE Phase Committee
Bilborough College

Many, many thanks to the members of the Committee who have kept the wheels turning this year and have put in a tremendous amount of work to prepare for 2011 Conference. The Post-16 and HE Phase Committee is truly thriving – why not join us?

I was recently invited to contribute to a seminar at one of the Russell Group of universities entitled: 'The Future of Geography'. The focus of this disciplinary navel-gazing was the expectations of undergraduates of their Geography course when the increased fees kick in. The discussion drifted to the future of the department – apparently the School of Geography may be divided. The virtue of an holistic degree was questioned – should it lead to a BA or a BSc?

Many of my A level students claim preference for one or other 'half' of the subject. We exacerbate this perceived polarity by splitting the teaching (my two colleagues have very clear preferences).

In colleges and universities everywhere senior management struggles to classify us. At my own college (Bilborough in Nottingham) we are located in the Business and Humanities faculty. When I taught at Farnborough and at Richmond upon Thames, we migrated to Science where having access to technicians to prepare practical lessons was a huge bonus.

Sometimes it depends on which other subjects we connect with. We transfer our wide-ranging skills to business studies, travel and tourism, world development, history, humanities, environmental studies/science, geology, biology – you name it – and we can bring a distinctive geographical perspective to these other disciplines. Who is uniquely placed to interpret the series of inter-connected disasters that have befallen Japan? Who can best explain why the earthquake occurred, and how? Why the tsunamis struck in the way they did? Why so many people live so densely along the coast? Why they built nuclear power plants there? Why they need nuclear power? Why these events have slowed car production in the UK?

Only fully-rounded geographers have the holistic vision to make sense of these events. And this is why we shall continue to recruit young people to our ranks, eager to comprehend global events. The English Baccalaureate should do us a favour, Geography is one of the chosen subjects and this will increase numbers at key stage four, to the benefit of the sixth form and universities.

The perennial fault line that prides human from physical must be resisted. We must build shock-proof structures and flexible learning paths. At Nottingham Trent University the rift extended not only between faculties but also campuses, to the detriment of the human geography department which was then subducted into international relations. Geography departments everywhere should beware shifts in their boundaries.

Who are the Post 16 – HE Phase Committee?

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John Smith

Sustainable urban living in the Middle East

Emma Rawlings Smith CGeog
British School - Al Khubairat, Abu Dhabi

Each week the number of people living in cities grows by nearly a million. Half of all global citizens now live in urban areas. This passage from a predominantly rural to a predominantly urban society is known as the *urban transition*. The UN reports that population growth is expected to peak at 9.1 billion in 2050, with five billion people likely to be living in cities. In Africa and Asia this amounts to a doubling of the urban population between 2000 and 2030, by which time towns and cities in developing countries will make up 80% of urbanites, many of whom will be poor. The rapidity of this change means the need for sustainable development has never been greater.

Figure 1. A view of the central business district of Abu Dhabi from the breakwater (E Smith)



Urban areas have a much larger ecological footprint than rural areas. Cities are a drain on resources, the built landscape unable to supply basic needs of the residence including food, energy, water and sanitation. As many of the global megacities with populations greater than 10 million are already overpopulated, much future growth will occur in smaller metropolitan areas. We might ask how can sustainable city design can become a reality?

Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi is capital of the largest of the seven emirates that make up the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and is the administrative centre of the emirates with the same name. It is situated on the eastern side of the Arabian Peninsula, located on a low-lying T-shaped island which juts into the Arabian Gulf (see Figure 1). Rapid growth has seen the population increase from 250 000 in 1980 to a current population of 930 000. The city was planned and designed in the 1970s, but was never envisaged to have more than 600 000 residents. The UAE has the highest ecological footprint in the world at 9.5 global hectares, water usage has reached 590 litres per capita per day and carbon emissions in the emirate are fourth highest in the world at 25.1 tonnes per capita per year.

Abu Dhabi is home to 8% of proven crude oil reserves, with enough petroleum at current production levels to last 100 years. Oil exports began in 1962 from the off-shore Das island reserve and have been the mainstay of the economy ever since. The emirate is transforming and diversifying its economy away from one based on hydrocarbons. It is planned that by 2020 7% of the energy mix will be from renewable sources.

Sustainable futures: the Masdar Initiative

Abu Dhabi illustrates many of the challenges faced by rapidly expanding modern cities. Recent urban developments are an outcome of the visionary Plan Abu Dhabi 2030, a complete development of the city's islands, coastline and 'off-island' mainland. Under the Urban Structure Framework Plan the key directions include; Sustainability, Environment, Culture and Connectivity.



The Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (ADFEC) better known as the Masdar Initiative has rapidly stimulated investment, research and development in the renewable energy sector. Established in 2006, Masdar has built upon the environmental legacy of the UAE's Founding Father Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan. Through five integrated units Masdar aims to be the world's benchmark for sustainable development.

1. Masdar City

Once completed in 2016 the 7 sq km Masdar City will house 40 000 residence and 1 500 businesses working in the clean technology field. As Abu Dhabi diversifies its energy sector, it is hoped that the zero-carbon zero-waste project will create 70 000 new jobs and increase the emirate's GDP by more than 2% a year. Embedded carbon values from construction will be similar to any other city development, however on completion carbon emissions are to fall to zero. The high-density US\$22 billion walled city will be car free, with no-one living more than 200 metres from the personal rapid transit system (PRT) The PRT using driverless electric vehicles with embedded magnets and onboard sensors to aid travel around the city. Buildings are closely packed to throw shadows on the streets and a wind tower or barajeel has been designed to encourage cooling air flow.

2. Masdar Institute

At the heart of the city and the first buildings to be constructed is the Masdar Institute of Science and Technology, the world's first graduate level institution created in collaboration with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). It seems according to HE Ban Ki Moon UN Secretary General, speaking at the 4th World Future Energy Summit (WFES) 2011 that the Institute will succeed in its two missions; to be both a world-class graduate-level institution and to position Abu Dhabi as a knowledge hub and engine for socio-economic growth.

In an address during the Opening Ceremony of WFES 2011 with 26 000 attendees, HE Ban Ki Moon, UN Secretary General, said, "Abu Dhabi is becoming justifiably renowned as a hub of progress. You have brought remarkable wealth from the desert sands, and used it to create a vibrant modern nation. And your Masdar Initiative speaks of something more - a vision to build on and go beyond the age of fossil fuels to a new sustainable future. The decisions we make today on energy will have far-reaching consequences."

3. Masdar Power

The 10 Mega Watt Solar Photovoltaic farm already in place at Masdar produces 17 500 MWh of clean energy annually, reducing carbon emissions by 15 000 tonnes. A second scheme the 100MW Shams 1 concentrated solar power (CSP) plant is to be the largest CSP plant in the world, saving a more substantial 175 000 tonnes of CO₂. CSP are systems that use lenses or mirrors to concentrate sunlight onto oil pipes which produce steam and drive a turbine creating electricity. Masdar does not operate only in Abu Dhabi, international projects include the 1 000 MW London Array off-shore wind farm and an on-shore wind farm providing 25% of the Seychelles' energy needs.

4. Masdar Capital

Masdar Capital was set up in 2006 in order to manage the Masdar Clean Tech investment funds. Masdar Clean Tech Fund 1 and 2 have total investments of US\$ 515 million. Funds will be used for investments in pioneering cleantech and renewable technologies.

5. Masdar Carbon

When the UAE ratified the Kyoto Protocol in 2005 as a non-Annex 1 country, it had no obligation just the desire to reduce carbon emissions. Masdar Carbon in conjunction with the German energy company E.ON is currently developing one of the world's largest carbon capture and storage (CCS) projects, recognised under the UN Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol. From 2013, 5 million tonnes of carbon will be captured per year from the power plants and heavy industries of Abu Dhabi. The current practice of injecting imported natural gas into oil reservoirs to enhanced fuel recovery will cease. Switching to CO₂ oil recovery would lessen Abu Dhabi's gas import bill whilst maintaining oil production levels. According to the

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Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change CCS technology has the potential to reduce carbon emissions by up to 90%.

Think big...Act local

Big flagship environmental projects such as Masdar are of course not the only way to improve energy efficiency and reduce resource consumption in cities. The Masdar initiative will allow the development of a valuable knowledge hub and will hopefully act as a catalyst towards a more sustainable future in the Middle East.

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Foreign Direct Investment in Tourism

Alan Marvell,
University of Gloucestershire

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is the investment of assets from a foreign country to a host country. The flow of capital from the foreign country is invested in assets such as land, businesses or the construction of new facilities. This is different to a foreign company investing in the stock market of another country as in times of economic uncertainty the investment can easily be withdrawn. Foreign Direct Investment signifies a more lasting relationship between the foreign country and the host country as new facilities, buildings and land cannot easily be abandoned or removed.

FDI provides a foreign company with new market opportunities, cheaper production costs and access to new supplies of labour, products and finance. For a host country it can provide new technologies, capital, products and management skills and as such provide an impetus for economic growth.

Those in favour of FDI suggest that investment benefits both the host country and the foreign country in terms of stimulating economic development. Those against FDI oppose the power of multinational companies and their influence over vulnerable economies as the foreign company directly owns and controls the business and as such can have a negative effect on local competition.

The nature of FDI involvement is diverse. It is wrong to assume that the relationship is bi-lateral, that the relationship is just between the foreign and host countries. It is better to think about the relationship as a web that spans several countries. For example a company may apply a model of vertical production where investment in one country provides the raw materials for production in another. In other cases the FDI may be simply a base from which to export products from a

foreign country to other neighbouring countries, which has less tangible benefits to the host country.

The nature of FDI is changing as mergers and acquisitions place domestic companies in the hands of foreign owners. A growth in licensing, intellectual property and software development also encourages foreign companies to invest in host countries to secure advantages in the global marketplace.

Trade agreements between countries are an important consideration for attracting inward investment. Following the General Agreement on Trade in Services (1995) tourism services were named to facilitate trade between countries. Therefore companies can trade freely between member states which in turn attract FDI.

Tourism

Tourism is a complex industry that comprises many industry sectors including accommodation, transport, entertainment, financial services, construction, agriculture, health and medical services and telecommunications forming a complex value chain (see figure 1). Money spent on tourism permeates through the value chain affecting a wide number of associated industries. This multiplier effect allows many direct and indirect effects of tourism to be experienced across a domestic economy. Tourism is important as it is labour intensive and provides employment, especially for semi-skilled people in rural areas (United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean 2008, p.103). The sector is the largest source of foreign earnings for approximately one-third of the world's developing countries. Many countries favour tourism as a vehicle for economic development as it can redistribute wealth and attract FDI. In the Caribbean, for example, the service economy accounts for the majority of income generation and two-thirds of those services are tourism-related.

Foreign investment can provide the tourism sector with:

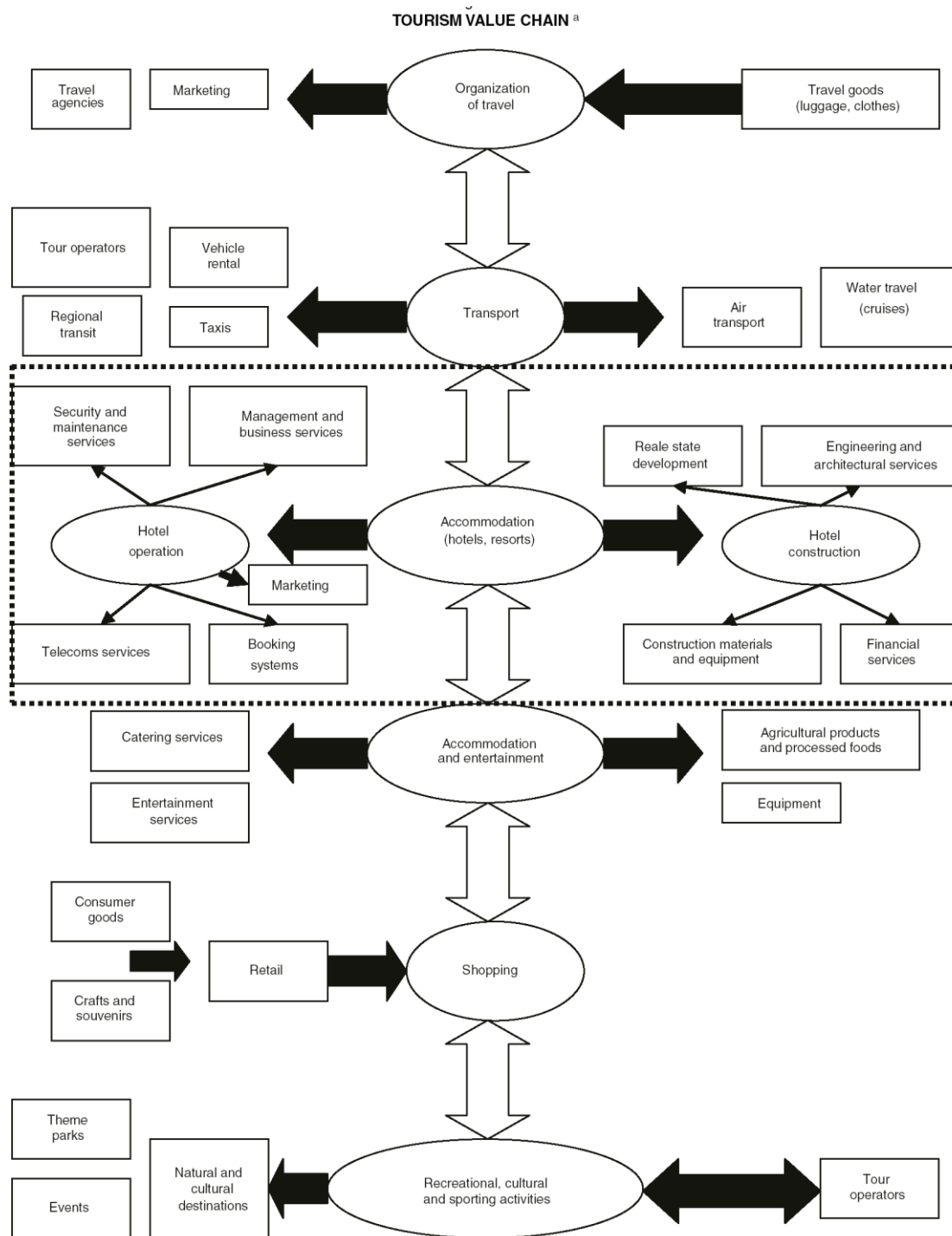
- a) An equity stake, e.g. in a hotel chain, a tour operator, or a car rental business;
- b) Construction and development of a hotel or other tourism facility;
- c) Property development;
- d) Development of a theme park or attraction;
- e) Setting up as a supplier to domestic or foreign firms (e.g. a training facility, provision of equipment, cleaning, catering or marketing);
- f) Management contracts for service providers in the tourism sector.

(United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2010) pp.19-20.)

Tourism can benefit economic development by providing a series of forward and backward linkages. Hotels and tourist resorts require supplies from farmers, drinks companies, construction, communication and utility companies such as electricity, water and sewerage. These are backward linkages, as the effect of tourism investment provides a demand for these services. Forward linkages are developed when services are provided to other sectors, such as conference and events management, entertainment industries, tour operations, etc.

The possibilities of maximising the benefits of FDI to the local economy are to develop these linkages using local companies. It is clear that the hotel is at the heart of the value chain. Rather than importing food for the hotel sector, local farmers can be encouraged to switch production methods to supply the hotels with fresh produce. The crops grown may not be the staple crop of the destination but ones that are presented on international menus, for example lettuce rather than cassava or yam. The negative impacts of the tourism industry have been well researched from the degradation of community values and heritage to environmental quality. It is essential that these negative impacts are managed and minimised within acceptable limits and the positive benefits encouraged.

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Figure 1



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of James Gollub, Amy Hosier and Grace Woo, *Using Cluster-Based Economic Strategy to Minimize Tourism Leakages* [online] http://www.ibcdtur.org.br/downloads/tourism_leakages.pdf, 2003.

^a The activities encased within the dotted lines are the sector's core activities.

Source: United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (2008, p.101).

Development of a tourism industry requires investment in infrastructure, including transport, utilities and telecommunications. Where developing countries lack the necessary capital, technology or knowledge, FDI is regarded as a way of filling the gap.

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Before an investment is made, a multinational company will assess the potential of a series of local destinations. Once successful then the company will roll out its operation, including standardised products and global branding. By applying FDI the destination gains further access to global markets. Loyal patrons and/or corporate partners of a hotel chain will then be presented with the choice of a new hotel, a new destination. The extent to which smaller hotels and tourism businesses can compete is an issue of concern but both have the potential to co-exist as they are offering a different visitor experience.

Recent trends are for global brands to franchise their operations. In so doing they do not directly own the buildings as property management is provided by other companies. Within the hotel sector the company will supply the brand and management services. This has advantages to a hotel group as they are not required to provide the investment for the buildings. Typically an investor without knowledge of the hotel industry can acquire land and build a hotel for a foreign company to manage. This is a distinctive feature of FDI in tourism as compared with other sectors of industry.

Branding strategies are important as different hotel brands will target different groups whilst remaining under the control of the parent company. Through mergers and acquisitions there are fewer and fewer global hotel operators as the top ten international hotel chains represent twenty percent of global supply (Bardham, *et al* 2008, in United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean 2008, p.105).

The top ten global hotel groups 2009

	Hotel group	Country of origin	Number of rooms	Number of hotels
1	InterContinental Hotels Group PLC	England	646,679	4,438
2	Wyndham Hotel Group	United States	597,674	7,114
3	Marriott International Inc.	United States	595,461	3,420
4	Hilton Worldwide	United States	585,060	3,530
5	Accor Hospitality	France	499,456	4,120
6	Choice Hotels International Inc.	United States	487,410	6,021
7	Best Western International	United States	308,477	4,048
8	Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide Inc.	United States	298,522	992
9	Carlson Hotels Worldwide	United States	159,756	1,058
10	Hyatt Hotels Corp.	United States	122,317	424

Source: Hotels Magazine (2010, p.24).

FDI in tourism is concentrated in activities such as hotel accommodation, restaurants and car rentals. However there is little FDI in tour operations, reservation systems, travel agencies or airlines as these tend to be provided by the host country. For example, the airline industry although global in its activities does not necessarily take place through FDI but through strategic alliances. The three largest alliances dominate 70 percent of the global market, including Star Alliance (e.g. BMI and Singapore Airlines), Oneworld (e.g. British Airways and American Airlines) and SkyTeam (e.g. Air France and Delta Air Lines). Joint use of resources means that efficiency gains and cost saving can be reached without expanding operations. Further alliances are being created with ancillary companies such as car rental, hotels, cruise operators and financial services rather than through FDI (Endo 2006).

It is a myth that most tourism FDI occurs within developing countries. In fact FDI in tourism has gone mainly to developed countries (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 2007, p.14, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 2010, p. 14). This is because most of the global hotel brands wish to have a presence in established markets such as the major towns and cities providing leisure and business tourism and as such the majority of these

occur in developed countries. However tourism FDI in developing countries has seen an increase during the last five years, especially in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

It is often assumed that FDI in tourism is widespread, representing global industry and global ownership. This is in part caused by global branding of hotel names. However, tourism FDI is not as global as other industries. The largest originators of tourism FDI are the UK and the US. However these represent a relatively small amount of the total FDI for each country, 2.7% of the UK and 1.2% of the US (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 2007, p.19).

It is estimated that only 20% of hotel multinational companies have an investment in their subsidiary hotels abroad, of which approximately half are joint ventures (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 2007, p.35). However a visible global brand helps to encourage investment and enhances the tourism product.

Example

In an attempt to attract FDI the Brazilian government exempted tourism development projects from a three year lock-in clause. The clause restricted foreign investors from transferring profits to the home country for three years. It is hoped that by removing the clause will encourage speculators and encourage further growth. There is a desire to encourage a greater range of foreign brands to expand deeper into global markets.

Under the new rules companies can transfer their profits as long as they have at least a fifty percent stake in the development and an additional twenty percent for the development of hotel rooms. The reason that the Brazilian government is actively encouraging FDI is that there are approximately 1.2 million hotel rooms in Brazil, but the projected demand for rooms by 2020 is estimated to be 6.6 million. This is due to the planned FIFA World Cup in 2014 which will take place across 12 cities and the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2016 (InvestinBrazil 2010).

Conclusion

Tourism has an 'Achilles heal' in so far that it is vulnerable to external factors such as political disputes, terrorism, foreign exchange rates, economic decline, natural disasters, safety issues and negative publicity brought about by malpractice. Investment has to withstand such negative influences as sustainability is not just about environmental and cultural sustainability but also about economic sustainability.

Tourism must be able to deliver tangible benefits in terms of jobs and skills development. It needs to embrace 'pro-poor' tourism so that the wider community benefits from the investment. This is possible by engaging with the value chain of tourism and allowing local communities to participate (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 2009).

The effect of FDI is to embrace the notion of globalization where "think globally, act locally" can be applied. Although this applies to large multinational companies, small and medium sized enterprises do not have the same access to resources and therefore have limited FDI capability.

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Top Spec – going beyond core texts

Bob Digby
GA Community Geographer

Do you bemoan the passing of an era – real or fiction! – in which post-16 students read widely around their subject? Do you despair at ways in which core texts claim to provide a one-stop shop for course knowledge and understanding; or how students clutch at these in the period leading to exams? Do you wonder what to offer as up-to-date reading matter for students with a university interview? Time to reach for 'Top Spec'!

'Top Spec' is a series of student textbooks – the GA's first – designed for use by 16-19 year olds in schools and colleges. The fifth and sixth are due for publication later this spring. Edited by Bob Digby and Sue Warn, each book helps to resource option topics from different specifications that commercial publishers often omit. Each book is about 50-60 pages in length, and is designed for use by post-16 students in schools and colleges. Importantly, each goes beyond the requirements of current UK post-16 specifications. Some 'Top Specs' are on topics relatively recent to post-16 specifications, such as Health, whereas others add recent research to conventional themes such as population or flooding.



Each 'Top Spec' is written for average and above-average ability students on a range of different post-16 courses in Geography across the UK, including Scottish Highers, the IB and Pre-U. Uniquely, each book brings together a combination of an academic with experience of teaching and recent research in universities, and a school teacher, whose job is to make this research readable and usable by 16-19 year olds. The editors hope that the series will also help students taking examination or diploma courses in other subjects (e.g. Health-related courses), as well as university applicants for Geography-related courses, and even those managing new topics in their first year of university.



Each book in the series consists of:

- written chapters, with illustrations and data to complement the text.
- activities for use in class and as guides for private study. Some activities are designed to encourage discussion, whilst others help to promote students' understanding of the issues.
- ideas for further research and independent learning.
- a glossary of key words and terms.

In addition, online resources help to extend the book further, and ensure that up-to-date research and data are available to students.

The full list of titles in the series can be seen in the GA's Publications Catalogue, or online at geography.org.uk.

Every picture tells a story!

Iain Palot
Chichester College

Does the college/school library or someone you know take *The Guardian*™ ? If it does you are probably already familiar with the daily centre spread photographs which at least once a week provide an excellent resource for some part of the A level specifications no matter which one you teach. As a stimulus lesson at the start of a topic they can prove to be invaluable. They can also be used at a variety of levels depending on how you want the students to develop the ideas and what level of research they are capable of doing or indeed need to do. Whilst the expectations are higher working with A level students, these pictures could be just as useful lower down the school, as a stimulus for a mind movie; or for developing mysteries etc., at a higher level. In fact another activity with the A level students could be to devise a mystery for the lower school.

You could show the picture either as the full size copy from the paper or perhaps as a powerpoint image taken from the *Eyewitness* series on the newspaper website. At this stage it is important to point out that there is a copyright issue which may need to be considered if you intend to use this or indeed any other photograph extensively within and beyond school. Quite a lot of money was paid for permission to use this image beyond the classroom.

There are a number of starting points. Either you formulate the basis of the enquiry, or, ask the group what they think and what else they need to know in order to understand what is going on in the picture. The latter is by far the best as you get them thinking straightaway, the only problem is they might not come up with the necessarily relevant lines of enquiry and so may need some gentle steering. Depending on the size of the group you may have more questions than you need so judicious grouping of questions, via “post-its” on the board, will give a manageable number for the group to research and report back.

However the more you do this the better they get at it and before long will be looking well beyond the image and making the much more complex, “stretch and challenge” type connections that exist. I have left out a whole host of other obvious questions.





© Mohammad Sajjad/AP/Press Association Images

The Development Gap issues in the Edexcel specification is one area where this can work quite well. Students may have some basic development background from work done in previous years although have only have limited knowledge of the detail. They are however unlikely to know much about Pakistan beyond the headlines:

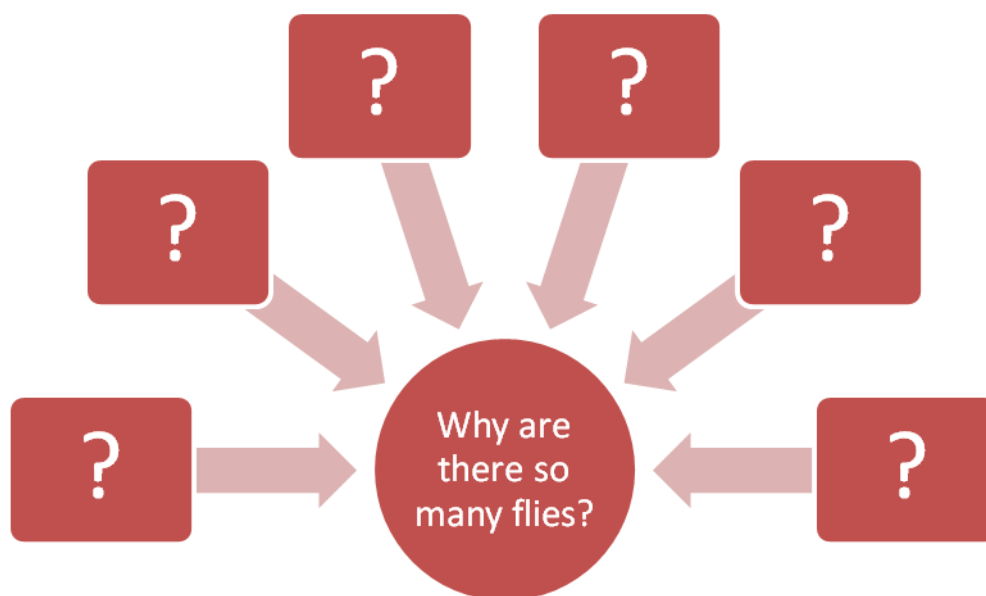
Heavy monsoon rains in NW Pakistan have caused rivers to burst their banks

At least 1,600 people are believed to have been killed and entire villages have been swept away

Some 20 million people have been affected and 6 million are in urgent need of food aid, according to the UN

Around \$460m is required for immediate needs, around \$275m has been donated so far

Good places to start searching include the BBC website, the Worldmapper series and then Earthtrends for really detailed information along with the CIA Handbook. Teachers and students will have their own “favourites” and will be familiar with the webquest approach to surfing. Having established the working groups, the students need to spend time formulating the supplementary questions that they need to ask in order to answer the key question.



Time will have to be allowed to research the answers and whether this is in class time or as a homework task will depend on circumstances. By allocating specific tasks which can be set as advance research for the following lesson, the students return with the necessary data/answers to contribute to the lesson. The fact they are individually responsible for collecting specific data reduces the incidence of “I forgot” syndrome and, as they are reporting back to their peers, this alone usually offers a far greater stimulus than you or I, and anyway they want their presentation to be the best. You may have to stoop to the depths of the promise of a “prize” for the best one, little chocolate globes always work for me, fair trade of course!

Time may permit a six slide powerpoint presentation, although with this example it already involves 36 slides to get through in an hour session. My institution has sessions that are two hours long or three hours with a short break on 30 minutes in the middle. This type of lesson can therefore be concluded within one session although I appreciate places with shorter lessons will find this difficult if not impossible. Following discussion the production of the diagram on AO sized paper allows material to be displayed and then for students to collect information for the questions that they did not research. A composite piece of writing, always 500 words minimum, allows you to test their understanding as well as their ability to collect information and process it into an examination type of response.

Extension work could involve a role play activity with students representing the various agencies sat at work in the region trying to address their problems, national government, local tribal elders, NGOs, and so on. What are their differing priorities and concerns? Are they working in harmony

or in fact pulling in different directions?

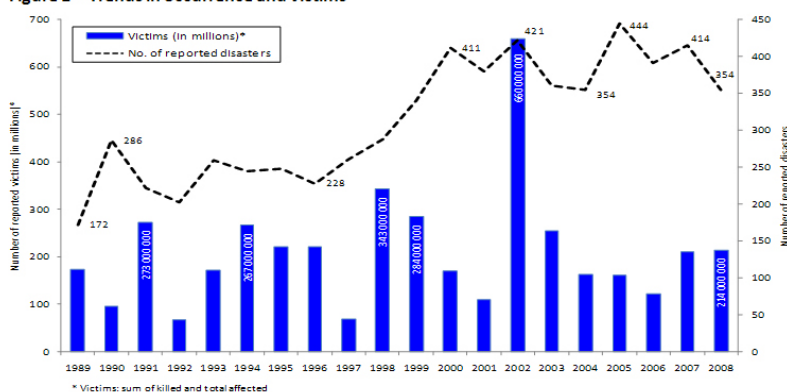
The need for quality research will be quite exacting and will soon sort the worker bees from the drones! At a time when resources are more and more centrally generated by the specification favoured publishers, this is an up to date, unbiased and above all, in these financially constrained times, **free** resource and we would be mad not to use it!

Managing hazards – dealing with Risk

Gill Miller
University of Chester

There is compelling evidence that the world is experiencing more severe natural events, and that population growth is turning these natural events into disasters, with rising rates destruction. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the exponential rise in the number of disasters documented each year and the relatively stable number of victims. This is partly due to increased awareness of risk and vulnerability to hazards, and the efforts made to reduce their impact on people and communities.

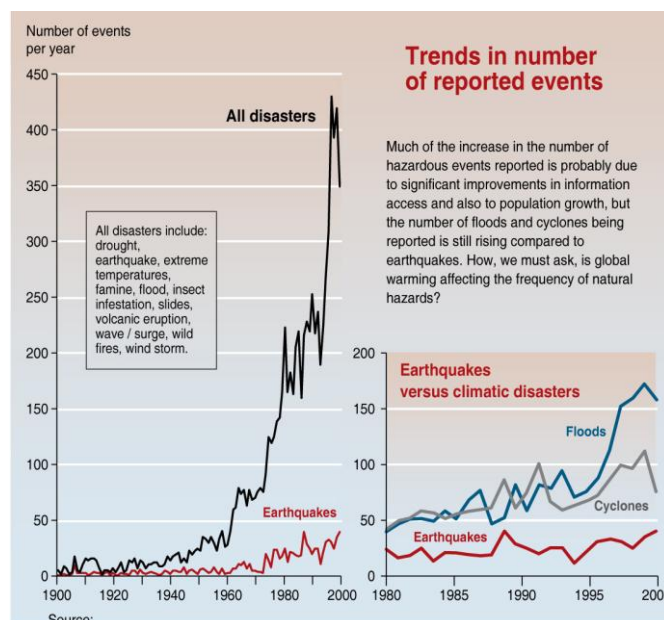
Figure 1 – Trends in occurrence and victims



Source: *EM-DAT: The OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database
www.emdat.be - Université Catholique de Louvain - Brussels - Belgium*

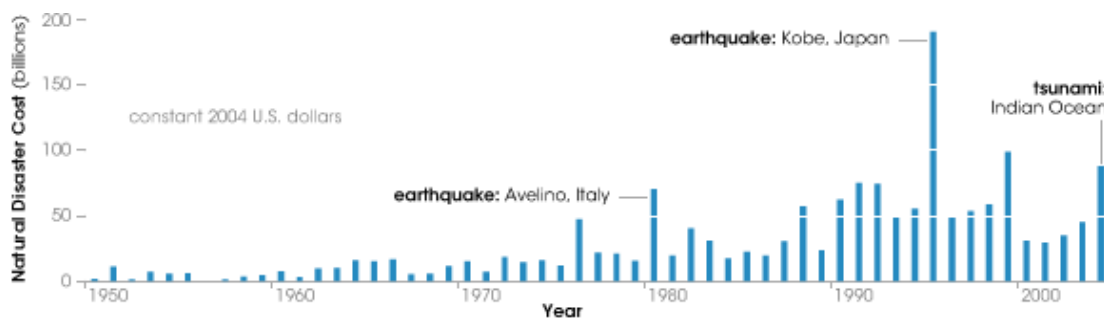
Figure 2

Decisions made now and in the past can influence the impact of weather events in the future. As cities expand, residents are more exposed to natural hazards. Poverty forces people to live on steep slopes, which are liable to instability and mudslides. Pressure on land for building is forcing more people onto high risk flood plains. Rising populations and increased infrastructure increase the human risk and vulnerability to hazards, especially in coastal areas at risk from flooding, cyclones and tsunamis. The UN estimates that the cost of natural disasters will rise to US\$185bn *per year* by the year 2100 (Figure 3). This huge sum is independent of any extra costs which may result from climate change.



Source: <http://maps.grida.no/go/graphic/trends-in-natural-disasters>

Figure 3 Annual Costs of natural disasters 1950 – 2010, billions of dollars



Source: <http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Features/RisingCost/>

In November 2010, the UN and World Bank launched a major report ‘Natural hazards, Unnatural Disasters’ which presented a strong case for governments and communities to find solutions to the increased risk of natural disasters. The majority of countries at risk are those in the developing world, many of whom are chronically poor, and which have heavy demands on limited national budgets. Removing the threat of disasters is expensive, and may take generations to achieve, even if it is possible. A more realistic focus for governments and aid agencies is disaster mitigation – reducing the severity of a natural disaster when it does occur and ensuring good management plans in progress to deal with the situation.

Figure 4 Recent major natural disasters

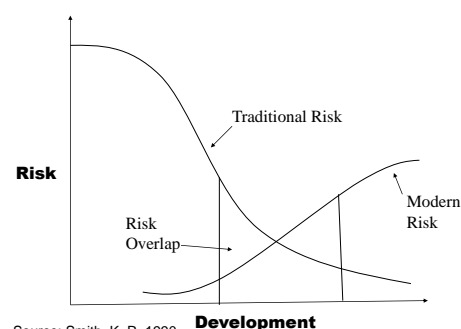
Event	Date	Human impact (as of 19 Oct 08) ("N/A" – Not Available)		
		Dead / missing	Injured	Displaced
Gujarat Earthquake (India)	2001	20,805	116,836	600,000
Bam Earthquake (Iran)	2003	26,200	30,000	600,000
SE Asia Tsunami	2004	298,000	N/A	N/A
Hurricane Katrina (USA)	2005	1,833	N/A	N/A
Hurricane Stan (Guatemala)	2005	2,000+	N/A	N/A
Pakistan Earthquake	2005	80,361	79,000	3,300,000
Yogyakarta Earthquake (Indonesia)	2006	5,749	35,568	600,000
Cyclone Sidr (Bangladesh)	2007	4,406	55,282	2,300,000
Cyclone Nargis (Burma) (see note)	2008	138,366	N/A	1,500,000
Sichuan Earthquake (China)	2008	87,476	361,822	15,000,000

In order to begin to develop mitigation strategies, there needs to be an assessment of risk. Risk identifies and evaluates the probability and level of impact of a particular hazard. The higher the risk, the more vulnerable the population and therefore the more urgent is the need to prepare and plan strategies which could reduce the impact of the disaster when it comes. Figure 4 gives you some idea of the impact of recent natural disasters.

Note: The University of London Benfield Natural Hazards Centre suggests that the death toll may actually have been as high as 1,000,000

Figure 5: the Environmental Risk Transition

Considerable attention has been given by researchers to identifying global environmental risk and how environmental risks have changed as countries have developed. Figure 5 shows the relationship between traditional risks and modern risks. Traditional risks tend to have an immediate impact but as countries develop, these risks are reducing as we learn how to manage them. We know that drinking dirty water immediately puts a population at risk from water-borne diseases such as typhoid and typhoid. As countries develop they establish clean water and sanitation systems which control these diseases.



Source: Smith, K. R. 1990

Modern day risks appear to be increasing for a number of reasons. Life is becoming more complicated and there are more inter-relationships between people and places. Diseases such as the H1N1 flu pandemic are quickly spread through a population as people move easily along transport networks. Some modern risks are particularly complex because their impact is delayed, sometimes for decades. For instance, smoking increases the risk of lung cancer but affects people at some date in the future. There is considerable evidence that burning fossil fuels increases atmospheric temperatures and will lead to climate change. In the future this is likely to lead to increased flooding from rising sea levels. Other modern risks are more speculative – such as the potential for increased use of agrochemicals to reduce natural soil fertility over time. The challenge is to respond positively to such future unseen risks.

Because many of the modern risks are delayed it is hard to persuade people to change their habits or lifestyle when the impact is speculative or when people have not personally experienced them. We have seen the recent severe flooding and cyclones in Queensland, Australia, and in Pakistan, but the effects are quickly forgotten when the images leave our TV screens. It is also clear that although several modern risks are *caused* by many people, the risks of the impacts are not *felt* by the same people in the same places.

Figure 5 also shows an area of risk overlap. These are the countries which are developing but experience both traditional and modern risks. Which countries do you think may be in this category?

Our own perception of risk is influenced by a number of factors (Figure 6). Some circumstances may increase our perception of risk, others may decrease it. How do you think the factors listed affect your own perception of risk?

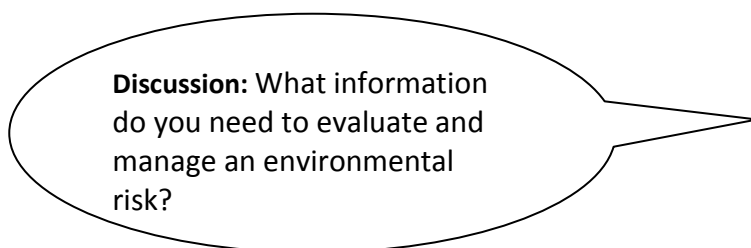


Figure 6: Factors which affect our perception of risk

- Number of fatalities
- Level of media attention
- Immediate / delayed impact
- Common / familiar hazard
- Controllable / uncontrollable hazard
- Level of understanding of hazard processes
- Confidence in local authority emergency procedures

Global Risk Indices

Identifying global risks, and persuading people to take them seriously, has implications for the quality and tools for monitoring risk. Statistical evidence which can be manipulated does not always convince the doubters. Crises of confidence, such as the controversy surrounding data from the Climate Research Unit of University of East Anglia, may undermine the assessment of risk. As modern risks have become more complex and have increasing impacts, international agencies such as United Nations Environment Programme UNEP have tried to devise reliable ways to evaluate the risks and impacts of natural disasters in different countries. Some disasters of course are very difficult to assess. It is difficult to assess the real impact of drought, when food shortages in one area or region may have serious economic losses in another. Attributing deaths to one particular hazard may also be inaccurate. Were the deaths from cholera in Haiti in November 2010 recorded as the result of the earthquake in January 2010, or due to poor sanitation existing at the time, or the result of the limited infrastructure which already existed in Port au Prince?

The following disaster risk indices have been developed to inform governments and agencies about risks so that appropriate mitigation strategies could be adopted.

The Disaster Risk Index <http://www.grid.unep.ch/activities/earlywarning/DRI/index.php> looks at the relative vulnerability of a population: *the higher the relative mortality the higher the relative vulnerability*. It identifies the socio-economic variables which best explain the deaths which have been recorded for different hazard types such as cyclones, earthquakes, flooding, droughts. It maps local data and the people exposed to hazards. There are limitations however - it does not

predict the impacts of development such as urbanisation, increased wealth of a population, or community attempts to protect themselves.

The Hotspots project. <http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/hazards/hotspots/synthesisreport.pdf> (see pages 16 - 22 of this report).

The project tries to identify the regions which have high mortality rates as well the impacts of social structures such as productivity, lost income, loss of household assets. It tries to include the cost of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction of damaged buildings and assets. The Hotspots project produces a series of world maps for different hazards which identify high risk and low risk area of the world. Look at the maps in the web link noted above. The Hotspots project aims to provide a rational basis for prioritising risk reduction efforts, to identify where risk management is most needed and where at-risk populations need to be educated to reduce their vulnerability to disasters.

The Americas programme. <http://www.iadb.org/exr/disaster/index.cfm?language=En&parid=1>

This is funded by the Inter American Development Bank, and focuses on disasters in Latin America. It includes a complex range of factors which come together to try to identify economic losses, vulnerability, and risk management. Look at the website to get some idea of the variety of factors which can impact of risk and risk management.

Are global risk indicators worthwhile?

The general consensus is yes. People are more vulnerable when they are ignorant of their risk. Communities with knowledge can weigh up the costs and benefits of particular strategies to avoid the impacts of disasters. Risk indices enable scientific evidence to be presented to various stakeholders to help them understand and manage complex situations. Several groups of people are interested in using the evidence of risk for their own purposes. NGOs and aid agencies use the evidence of risk to encourage funding to help vulnerable communities. The World Bank uses risk indices to encourage governments to make disaster mitigation schemes central to their national development plans. Private sector financial institutions are concerned about insurance and the value of assets. Governments use evidence of risk to inform their populations. Perhaps surprisingly, many traditional communities are 'risk-averse'; they regard disasters as acts of god and are often the most difficult to persuade of the risks they face and mitigation strategies which might help them. At the other extreme, some villagers have too high an expectation of any mitigation strategies to reduce their vulnerability to disasters.

Disasters have a particularly devastating impact on the poorest households. The more that their vulnerability to risks is understood, the more they can be supported to manage the effects of disasters. Disaster management also involves some really tough choices in terms of risk when funding is limited. Pelling (2003) has likened managing risk to a 'triage' model in an Accident and Emergency hospital. If there is no hope of survival, then people will die regardless of any disaster management strategies which are implemented, so nothing should be done to help. In other situations people can manage on their own without the extra support of such strategies. And for some communities where the risks can be realistically addressed, funds should be appropriately targeted so that more people benefit. If you were a government with limited funds for disaster management, what would you do?

Risk management needs to become central to the planning of government, civil society and private enterprise in order to give communities the best chance of dealing with the increase in natural disasters anticipated during the 21st century. Understanding global risk and the continuing development of risk indices make an important contribution to this process.

Pelling, M. (ed) 2003) *Natural disasters and development in a globalizing world*. Routledge. London

Cuba and Superpowers

Helen Hore
Central Sussex College

What do you think of when you think of Cuba? Cigars, sugar, Guantanamo, the Bay of Pigs, or Castro? All of these demonstrate the influence of a succession of different superpowers on Cuba.

Background Geography

Cuba is the largest Caribbean island stretching 1250 km from west to east. It is an island nation, which has been a Communist republic since 1961, in spite of lying only 180 km from the Florida Keys. Its Spanish-speaking population of just over 11 million is demonstrably multi-racial, with White Cubans (descended mainly from the Spanish) forming 65%, mixed race Cubans comprising about 25%, black Afro-Cubans forming about 10% and 1% of Asian origin. Cuba has a

tropical climate, sitting astride the north-east trade winds, which modify the summer heat bringing intense convective storms, whilst allowing dry, warm air to reach the country in winter. It is hit fairly frequently by hurricanes and in 2008 it suffered severe damage from both Gustav and Ike.



The Colonial Period



Fig 1. Spanish colonialism. Trinidad, a 18th century Spanish town built from the wealth from sugar, now a UNESCO world heritage site.

The age of empire reached Cuba when Columbus landed on the north coast, claiming the territory for Spain. Although little gold was found in Cuba, its suitability for agriculture and its strategic location proved advantageous to Spain. Settlement by the Spanish followed and with it, the establishment of tobacco and sugar plantations. The native people were enslaved and were largely wiped out by the introduction of European diseases, to which they had no resistance. This shortage of labour led to the trade in slaves from Africa which started as far back as the early 1500s. As more slaves were shipped from Africa, improvements to production methods took place and the suitability of Cuba's soils and climate led to a dominance of sugar cane. By the early 1800s there were nearly 500 sugar mills in Cuba and production increased, rising annually from 10,000 tons in the 1770s to 16,000 tons in the 1790s. In spite of stop-start trading with America as Spain repeatedly sought to achieve trade exclusivity, by 1860, Cuba became the leading world producer of sugar. The scenic Valle de Los Ingenios, near Trinidad is a testament to these production methods, which even today remain heavily reliant on traditional methods.

The USA Influence

Cuban ports were finally opened to global trade by 1818, leading to increasing trade interest with the newly independent America. Cuban resistance to Spanish rule grew throughout the 19th century, as the Spanish-American War waged. It culminated in the signing of the Treaty of Paris

in 1898, in which Spain renounced all rights to Cuba, passing them to America. Although Cuba finally became formally independent from the USA in 1902, American businessmen had been busy buying up land in Cuba and the final agreement between the USA and Cuba, gave the USA a controlling interest in Cuba's foreign and economic affairs. For example, Cuba could not transfer any land to any power other than the United States and the controversial US military base at Guantanamo was established. Independence came with strings.

President Palma was elected in 1902, and for the following three decades Cuba was ruled by a series of presidents, who had been leaders in the War of Independence. During the period, a series of projects were started to modernise the country, including building the central highway. It was during the military revolt of 1933 that Batista, a Cuban of mixed ancestry, initially rose to power through the ranks of the army and was subsequently elected as president in 1940 on a mandate to reform land ownership and labour rights. As a result, Cuba made progress during the 1940s and on many measures of development, the nation ranked highly at the time. Unionised labour was well paid, Cuba had more doctors per capita than the UK; infant mortality was the lowest in Latin America; and it had the 4th highest literacy rate in the region, although these statistics concealed a very poor underclass.

Taking advantage of a political vacuum in 1952, Batista seized power in an almost bloodless revolution. With continued strong support from the trade unions, he succeeded in being re-elected in 1953. Links with the USA continued with many Cubans looking to America for their cultural and economic inspiration. While Americans and Europeans holidayed in Havana, patronising the bars and brothels, labour regulation and corruption together led to economic stagnation. Corruption, nepotism and a highly organised Mafia all took root under Batista's elected successors.

The Communist Period

Fidel Castro was waiting in the wings to marshal the anti-American and anti-capitalist feeling which ordinary Cubans were harbouring. After his initial attack in 1953, capture, subsequent release and exile, Castro eventually seized control of the government in 1959. Immediately he exerted a strong grip on the country and by 1960, all the media were in state control. A network of neighbourhood committees was set up across Cuba to act as the 'eyes and ears of the Revolution' and to report any counter revolutionary activity. Castro rejected Eisenhower's approaches. He held only condemnation for the USA's paternalistic and imperialistic approach, and its supply of arms to the Batista regime.

Instead, Castro sought support from the USSR and in the 'bipolar' world of the 1960s, he signed an agreement to import Soviet oil. Eisenhower, responded by reducing Cuba's sugar import quota to the USA, so beginning the long alienation with the USA and aligning Cuba with the growing Soviet superpower. After the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961 by the USA and anti-Castro Cuban exiles, Castro announced that Cuba was now a communist state and he continued his socialist reforms by nationalising industry, redistributing property and collectivising agriculture. Dissidents were imprisoned and tortured in the name of the revolution. The 1962 Cuban missile crisis heightened the tensions of the Cold War, as Khrushchev wanted to place Soviet missiles in Cuba as defence against American invasion. In 1965, Castro became First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, which to this day,

is still the only official political party in the country. Ties with the USSR continued, enabling Castro to build up a considerable arsenal of Soviet weapons and to invest in roads and hospitals.

In 1991, as had happened so often before, Cuba's fate was tied to that of a superpower. With the fall of the Soviet Union, Cuba overnight lost its major markets and subsidies. In addition, the



Fig. 2 Billboard declaring Solidarity for the five Cuban heroes, who were arrested in 1998 after espionage activities in Florida and are still imprisoned in the USA.

fall in the price of sugar resulted in the economy teetering on the brink of collapse. Factory closures and food shortages ensued during the so-called 'special period', when unemployment and poverty deepened. In 1994 Castro responded by legalising the dollar and encouraging outside investors and tourists to come to Cuba.

The Present

In Cuba today, Fidel Castro and his fellow revolutionaries are revered for achieving autonomy in a nation, previously controlled by foreign interests. However, the bureaucratic machine of the state has left Cubans cut off from the changing world around them and unable to respond to competition. Raul Castro has declared a surprising number of reforms, which include decentralising decision-making in agriculture and construction but it is yet to be seen how these will affect people. The trade embargo and travel bans still exist and are still punitive, although Obama has taken tentative initiatives to relax travel restrictions for Cuban family members living in the USA. The emerging economic power of China, with its communist credentials, is much less hesitant. By 2007, China had become Cuba's biggest trading partner after Venezuela, with bilateral trade at £1.5bn, buying sugar and nickel from Cuba. China is now the third largest market in the world for Cuban cigars. In return, China has provided a loan package to repair and improve Cuban hospitals. However, in spite of a good education system, many people are still very poor. Wages are paid in the less valuable *peso* whilst tourists use the higher value *convertible peso*, which has replaced the dollar.



Fig. 3 The American influence. Lovingly maintained, old American Buick in Havana.

It will be interesting to see how relations with China and the rest of the world develop in future. Will China provide the investment to complete the Autopista Nacional which still stops at Santa Clara, when the Soviet money ran out? Will Cubans be further encouraged to develop their entrepreneurial skills and grow their economy for themselves? Tourists from Europe and Canada flock to see this nation, in part preserved in a 1950s 'aspic' with its repainted American cars and derelict colonial facades and to enjoy the sun and scenery of this Caribbean island. With European cruise ships now permitted to dock in Havana ready to disgorge their hundreds of passengers, it seems more likely that increasing global influences will penetrate the steely exterior of the border controls and reach the genuine warmth and vibrancy of the Cuban people.

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Pre-U: a genuine alternative?

Peter Price CGeog
Head of Geography, Charterhouse

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and not of his employer or any examination board.

“What A Level Spec do you do?”

A frequently asked question when geography teachers get together

My next question is usually

How’s it going?”

Few respondents jump up and down with glee, so what has happened since 2008 when we chose our new Spec?

Sadly, I still see the 2008 GCE specification review as a great missed opportunity for secondary school geography. After a long period of content stability, stagnation or “fossilisation” (depending on your view), surely it was time for a “paradigm shift” once more, in order to bridge the ever-widening gap between HE and school geography.

Certainly, assessment experienced a major change with Curriculum 2000 (and how many of us meekly entered the world of increasing modularity when our educational principles screamed that it wasn’t right, and that it DEFINITELY wasn’t right for a holistic subject like Geography?) but the content had remained depressingly familiar since I started teaching in 1994 and even back to my own A Level in the early 1980s. Prior to the 2008 review, the Labour government sought to rein in the exam boards by decreeing that each should only offer one Geography specification (indeed, there had been mutterings of a single, national exam board).

Thus, as I went through the round of glitzy exam board specification launches (Lord’s and the Emirates on one day!), a clear continuum emerged: OCR and AQA had plumped for a very traditional specification with little to scare or excite teachers. Indeed, I distinctly remember flicking through the huge glossy promotional file produced by the market leader before tossing it towards the bin with a frustrated: “Well, I’m not teaching that!” At the other end was Edexcel with a brave and radical attempt to shake up post-16 Geography. Somewhere to the radical side of middle was a new serious contender, WJEC, brought into the picture by the lack of choice elsewhere and prompted by a concerted campaign to break out of its national market.

However, there was one other alternative (assuming that you weren’t an IB school): CIE Pre-U. Sadly, whilst the launch of this new qualification was in line with the 2008 review, the Geography “syllabus” lagged slightly behind, with it not being finally available for proper scrutiny until the summer of 2008, too late for most of our decision making.

At Charterhouse, we started teaching Pre-U in September 2009. When I receive the question at the start of this article, I proudly reply: “Cambridge Pre-U” and answer the follow-up question with: “Absolutely loving it” along with an evangelical summary of its benefits. Over 100 post-16 institutions (maintained and independent) now offer at least one Pre-U subject and at least 4 are teaching Pre-U Geography. When this adoption is met with a quizzical look, I quote the much slower adoption of IB Diploma Programme in this country in the early 1970s and no-one doubts its place in the curriculum.

So, why am I so excited about this qualification?

1. The course

The Human course content is radical, contemporary, challenging. It Includes: Spatial Inequalities & Poverty, Health & Disease, Trade, Debt & Aid, The Provision of Food.

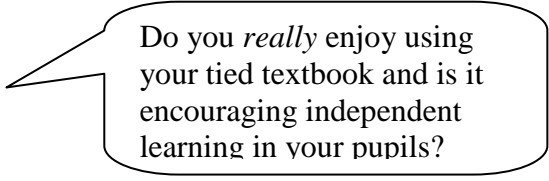
The Physical course: 'proper' geography with the "hard" bits back in..

Gone are the same old topics that we teach at KS3 and GCSE. Planning this course has been the most stimulating challenge of my teaching career – I have read more in the past 2 years than in my previous 15 years of teaching,

Crucially, no topics are compulsory, allowing a bespoke course to be designed working to the strengths of teachers and avoiding the interest-crushing repetition of GCSE topics.

2. Learning styles

- the lack of "tied" resources make planning time-consuming and challenging
- but Pre-U encourages pupils into wide-ranging and primary research; there just are no other sources for some of the contemporary content
- the "fieldwork" paper (4) demands wider research on a pre-released topic.



Do you *really* enjoy using your tied textbook and is it encouraging independent learning in your pupils?

3. **Assessment** - 5 terms "just to teach the geography" to quote the Chief Examiner. Doesn't that sound good? Even if Michael Gove reins in GCE modules, "modular" specifications will remain just that: fragmented and artificially compartmentalised. By way of contrast, Pre-U was designed to be cumulative and holistic; the topics I teach take pupils up a spiral of knowledge over 2 years (sound familiar pre-Curriculum 2000?). Similarly, Pre-U gives you the academic liberation of more open-ended (rather than prescribed) content.

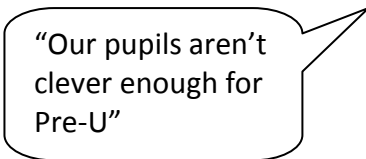
Pre-U offers authentic "stretch and challenge".

Rather than the arithmetic hurdle of A* (destined to be the "new A" very shortly?), the top D1 grade is awarded on the basis of a judgement of the candidate's overall performance, just as degree classes are. Your best candidates should get the best results.

Lastly, a large portion of the assessment is based on "proper" 25 mark essays, marked holistically using a single generic mark scheme. Pupils handle these perfectly well in other subjects (even at GCSE) so why not in Geography?

4. **The people** - CIE are a large, internationally-renowned exam board, just one with whom most of us are not familiar. The syllabus was written by and is examined by teachers or highly experienced examiners. I have easy access to the Chief Examiner and Subject Officer for queries. In 7 years as an AQA centre, I never even knew the name of my Subject Officer.

5. Outcomes –



"Our pupils aren't clever enough for Pre-U"

Nonsense! Pre-U is challenging and stimulating, that kind of "hard" which we all wish for our pupils. Pre-U is well-named as it develops independent learners who can think for themselves, exactly what universities say they want.

If you answer the second question asked at the top of this article with a resigned "It's alright", then maybe you should have another look at CIE's Pre-U courses - you won't be disappointed. Find out more on the CIE website, and come to the Lecture Plus session that the Chief Examiner and I are running at the GA Conference in Guildford on April 16.

