Learning objectives

- How to construct radial graphs.

Investigating urban regeneration

The UK's towns and cities are constantly changing in a process known as urban regeneration. As older buildings become derelict they are demolished creating brownfield sites that are ready for redevelopment. This is an opportunity for planners to create an attractive urban environment and encourage investment by businesses. Carefully planned regeneration may solve problems such as dereliction and traffic congestion. Ugly buildings can be replaced with cutting-edge modern designs. Traffic systems can be redesigned to make streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

How can fieldwork help us investigate regeneration?

A fieldwork **investigation** of urban regeneration needs to start with a clear **aim**. For example, you might decide that you want to investigate:

- whether local people feel that the regeneration has been successful. If so, you will need to design some **questionnaires** or **Likert surveys**. You might also be able to use secondary evidence to find out people's opinions about their town using online blogs;
- whether regeneration has had a positive effect on the urban environment. If so, you could **survey** areas of the town that have been redeveloped and compare them to areas that have not.

We can use fieldwork to investigate how regeneration has affected the urban landscape by:

- measuring **footfall** (the movement of pedestrians) to see whether areas that have been regenerated have more pedestrians than other parts of the town/city;
- using **EQI surveys** to assess whether regeneration has created a higher quality urban environment than parts of the town/city outside of the regeneration zone;
- using **bipolar** or **Likert Surveys** to assess what people think of the urban environment.

Figure 5 The entrance to the Bullring Shopping Centre – an area that has been regenerated.

Activities

1 **Use Figure 7 to describe the main similarities and differences between locations A and B. Remember that the axis for this graph includes negative scores.**

Using radial graphs to analyse urban environments

Radial graphs are a useful way to represent the data from an EQI or bipolar survey. This type of graph has several axes – in fact, you can have as many as you like – one for each variable. Figure 7 shows an example. It has been drawn using the results of a bipolar survey. This survey used 8 bipolar statements to compare two locations in Birmingham so the graph has 8 axes. Location A is an area that has been recently regenerated whereas location B is outside the regeneration zone. We can see that the area covered by the polygon for location A is considerably larger than the polygon for location B, meaning that the overall impression is that the urban environment is much more favourable at A than at B.

Figure 6 The area around Moor Street station is just outside the regeneration zone.

To draw a radial graph like Figure 7 you can use a software programme like Excel. Radial graphs can also be drawn by hand. To draw a radial graph by hand follow these steps.

Step One Work out how many axes you need and the angle between them. To do this, divide 360 by the number of axes. For example, to draw Figure 7, 360/8=45, so the angle between each **axis** is 45 degrees.

Step Two Decide on a scale for the length of each axis. For example, starting at -3 (the lowest number) in the centre of the diagram, you could mark each axis at 1cm intervals. Do this carefully so that each axis is exactly the same length.

Step Three Plot the scores for each bipolar survey on each axis. If you are comparing two or more locations, use two or more colours.

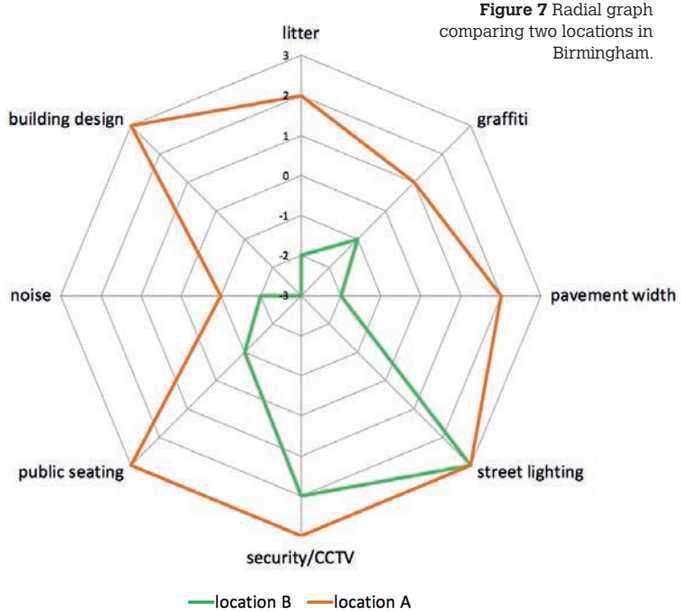

Figure 7 Radial graph comparing two locations in Birmingham.

Strengths and limitations of radial graphs	
Some strengths	**Some limitations**
• Radial graphs are very useful for making comparisons between two or more places. • They allow you to represent more than one variable at a time. • They are useful for plotting bipolar scores.	• Radial graphs have a limited use. They only really make sense if the different variables can all be measured using the same scale.