

Instruction question 1 to 5

Around the world, capital cities are disgorging bureaucrats. In the post-colonial fervour of the 20th century, coastal capitals picked by trade-focused empires were spurned for “regionally neutral” new ones. But decamping wholesale is costly and unpopular; governments these days prefer piecemeal dispersal. The trend reflects how the world has changed. In past eras, when information travelled at a snail’s pace, civil servants had to cluster together. But now desk-workers can ping emails and video-chat around the world. Travel for face-to-face meetings may be unavoidable, but transport links, too, have improved.

Proponents of moving civil servants around promise countless benefits. It disperses the risk that a terrorist attack or natural disaster will cripple an entire government. Workers in the sticks will be inspired by new ideas that walled-off capitals cannot conjure up. Autonomous regulators perform best far from the pressure and lobbying of the big city. Some even hail a cure for ascendant cynicism and populism. The unloved bureaucrats of faraway capitals will become as popular as firefighters once they mix with regular folk.

Beyond these sunny visions, dispersing central-government functions usually has three specific aims: to improve the lives of both civil servants and those living in clogged capitals; to save money; and to redress regional imbalances. The trouble is that these goals are not always realised.

The first aim—improving living conditions—has a long pedigree. After the second world war Britain moved thousands of civil servants to “agreeable English country towns” as London was rebuilt. But swapping the capital for somewhere smaller is not always agreeable. Attrition rates can exceed 80%. . . . The second reason to pack bureaucrats off is to save money. Office space costs far more in capitals. . . . Agencies that are moved elsewhere can often recruit better workers on lower salaries than in capitals, where well-paying multinationals mop up talent.

The third reason to shift is to rebalance regional inequality. . . . Norway treats federal jobs as a resource every region deserves to enjoy, like profits from oil. Where government jobs go, private ones follow. . . . Sometimes the aim is to fulfil the potential of a country’s second-tier cities. Unlike poor, remote places, bigger cities can make the most of relocated government agencies, linking them to local universities and businesses and supplying a better-educated workforce. The decision in 1946 to set up America’s Centres for Disease Control in Atlanta rather than Washington, D.C., has transformed the city into a hub for health-sector research and business.

The dilemma is obvious. Pick small, poor towns, and areas of high unemployment get new jobs, but it is hard to attract the most qualified workers; opt for larger cities with infrastructure and better-qualified residents, and the country’s most deprived areas see little benefit. . . . Others contend that decentralisation begets corruption by making government agencies less accountable. . . . A study in America found that state-government corruption is worse when the state capital is isolated—journalists, who tend to live in the bigger cities, become less watchful of those in power.

Q1. According to the author, relocating government agencies has not always been a success for all of the following reasons EXCEPT:

- (a) high staff losses, as people may not be prepared to move to smaller towns.
- (b) the difficulty of attracting talented, well-skilled people in more remote areas.
- (c) increased avenues of corruption away from the capital city.
- (d) a rise in pollution levels and congestion in the new locations.

Q2. According to the passage, colonial powers located their capitals:

- (a) based on political expediency.
- (b) to promote their trading interests.
- (c) where they had the densest populations.
- (d) to showcase their power and prestige.

Q3. The “long pedigree” of the aim to shift civil servants to improve their living standards implies that this move:

- (a) takes a long time to achieve its intended outcomes.
- (b) has become common practice in several countries worldwide.
- (c) is supported by politicians and the ruling elites.
- (d) is not a new idea and has been tried in the past.

Q4. The “dilemma” mentioned in the passage refers to:

- (a) relocating government agencies to boost growth in remote areas with poor amenities or to relatively larger cities with good amenities.
- (b) keeping government agencies in the largest city with good infrastructure or moving them to a remote area with few amenities.
- (c) concentrating on decongesting large cities or focusing on boosting employment in relatively larger cities.
- (d) encouraging private enterprises to relocate to smaller towns or not incentivising them in order to keep government costs in those towns low.

Q5. People who support decentralising central government functions are LEAST likely to cite which of the following reasons for their view?

- (a) It reduces expenses as infrastructure costs and salaries are lower in smaller cities.
- (b) Policy makers may benefit from fresh thinking in a new environment.
- (c) More independence could be enjoyed by regulatory bodies located away from political centres.
- (d) It could weaken the nexus between bureaucrats and the media in the capital.

Instruction Question 6 -10

The magic of squatter cities is that they are improved steadily and gradually by their residents. To a planner's eye, these cities look chaotic. I trained as a biologist and to my eye, they look organic. Squatter cities are also unexpectedly green. They have maximum density—1 million people per square mile in some areas of Mumbai—and have minimum energy and material use. People get around by foot, bicycle, rickshaw, or the universal shared taxi.

Not everything is efficient in the slums, though. In the Brazilian favelas where electricity is stolen and therefore free, people leave their lights on all day. But in most slums recycling is literally a way of life. The Dharavi slum in Mumbai has 400 recycling units and 30,000 ragpickers. Six thousand tons of rubbish are sorted every day. In 2007, the Economist reported that in Vietnam and Mozambique, “Waves of gleaners sift the sweepings of Hanoi’s streets, just as Mozambiquan children pick over the rubbish of Maputo’s main tip. Every city in Asia and Latin America has an industry based on gathering up old cardboard boxes.” . . .

In his 1985 article, Calthorpe made a statement that still jars with most people: “The city is the most environmentally benign form of human settlement. Each city dweller consumes less land, less energy, less water, and produces less pollution than his counterpart in settlements of lower densities.” “Green Manhattan” was the inflammatory title of a 2004 New Yorker article by David Owen. “By the most significant measures,” he wrote, “New York is the greenest

community in the United States, and one of the greenest cities in the world The key to New York’s relative environmental benignity is its extreme compactness. . . . Placing one and a half million people on a twenty-three-square-mile island sharply reduces their opportunities to be wasteful.” He went on to note that this very compactness forces people to live in the world’s most energy-efficient apartment buildings. . . .

Urban density allows half of humanity to live on 2.8 per cent of the land. . . . Consider just the infrastructure efficiencies. According to a 2004 UN report: “The concentration of population and enterprises in urban areas greatly reduces the unit cost of piped water, sewers, drains, roads, electricity, garbage collection, transport, health care, and schools.” . . .

[T]he nationally subsidised city of Manaus in northern Brazil “answers the question” of how to stop deforestation: give people decent jobs. Then they can afford houses, and gain security. One hundred thousand people who would otherwise be deforesting the jungle around Manaus are now prospering in town making such things as mobile phones and televisions. . . .

Of course, fast-growing cities are far from an unmitigated good. They concentrate crime, pollution, disease and injustice as much as business, innovation, education and entertainment. . . . But if they are overall a net good for those who move there, it is because cities offer more than just jobs. They are transformative: in the slums, as well as the office towers and leafy suburbs, the progress is from hick to metropolitan to cosmopolitan . . .

Q6.From the passage it can be inferred that cities are good places to live in for all of the following reasons EXCEPT that they:

- (a)help prevent destruction of the environment.
- (b)have suburban areas as well as office areas.
- (c)offer employment opportunities.
- (d)contribute to the cultural transformation of residents.

Q7.Which one of the following statements would undermine the author’s stand regarding the greenness of cities?

- (a)The compactness of big cities in the West increases the incidence of violent crime.
- (b)The high density of cities leads to an increase in carbon dioxide and global warming.
- (c)Over the last decade the cost of utilities has been increasing for city dwellers.
- (d)Sorting through rubbish contributes to the rapid spread of diseases in the slums.

Q8.We can infer that Calthorpe’s statement “still jars” with most people because most people:

- (a)do not regard cities as good places to live in.
- (b)consider cities to be very crowded and polluted.
- (c)regard cities as places of disease and crime.
- (d)do not consider cities to be eco-friendly places.

Q9.In the context of the passage, the author refers to Manaus in order to:

- (a)explain where cities source their labour for factories.
- (b)promote cities as employment hubs for people.
- (c)explain how urban areas help the environment.
- (d)describe the infrastructure efficiencies of living in a city.

Q10.According to the passage, squatter cities are environment-friendly for all of the following reasons EXCEPT:

- (a)They recycle material.
- (b)their transportation is energy efficient.
- (c)they sort out garbage.
- (d)their streets are kept clean.

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- S1.Ans.(d)
- S2.Ans.(b)
- S3.Ans.(d)
- S4.Ans.(a)
- S5.Ans.(d)
- S6.Ans.(b)
- S7.Ans.(b)
- S8.Ans.(d)
- S9.Ans.(c)
- S10.Ans.(d)

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