

Introduction to World Regional Geography

INTRODUCTION TO WORLD REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY

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PART I

INTRODUCTION TO GEOGRAPHIC SCIENCE

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO GEOGRAPHY

The discipline of geography bridges the social sciences with the physical sciences and can provide a framework for understanding our world. By studying geography, we can understand the relationships and common factors that tie our human community together. The world is undergoing globalization on a massive scale due to the rapid transfer of information and technology and the growth of modes of transportation and communication. The more we understand our world, the better prepared we will be to address the issues that confront our future. There are many approaches to studying world geography. This textbook takes a regional approach and focuses on themes that illustrate the globalization process, which in turn assists us in better understanding our global community and its current affairs.

Geography helps us make sense of the world through four historical traditions:

- Spatial analysis of natural and human cultures
- Earth science
- Area studies
- Human-landscape interactions

Spatial analysis includes many concepts tied to geographic information science (GIS): the analysis of the interactions and distribution of many types of information using computer databases. The GIS data are entered into computer programs that convert location indicators to points or features on a map. Earth science includes the study of landforms, climates, and the distribution of plants and animals. Area or regional studies focuses on a particular region to understand the dynamics of a specific interaction between human activity and the environment. For example, researchers studying human-landscape interaction examine the impact of humans on their landscape and find out how different cultures have used and changed their environments.

Geography provides the tools to integrate knowledge from many disciplines into a usable form by providing a sense of place to natural or human events. You will find that geography often explains why or how something occurs in a specific location. World geography utilizes the spatial approach to help understand the components of our global community.

The world is a complicated place that is getting harder to understand. Today, the world is trying to address climate change, mass extinction of species, globalization versus isolationism, terrorism versus threats by nations, and COVID-19, to name a few. This is where geography comes to play. To understand our world, we must understand the history and current social and economic situations worldwide. In addition, we need to have a strong understanding of science

and how empirical understanding, data, and evidence helps us understand the natural world. Moreover, we need to be able to see the interconnections between the physical and cultural environments we all live within.

Geography is a discipline that strives to understand the spatial and temporal distribution, connection, and patterns between those environments. Geographers use quantitative data through drones, satellite imagery, global positioning systems, geographic information systems, spatial statistics, and more to contribute to scientific knowledge. However, the discipline also used qualitative data, data not in the form of numbers, to understand phenomena in their natural setting and the meaning people bring to that phenomena.

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1.2 GEOGRAPHY AS A SCIENCE

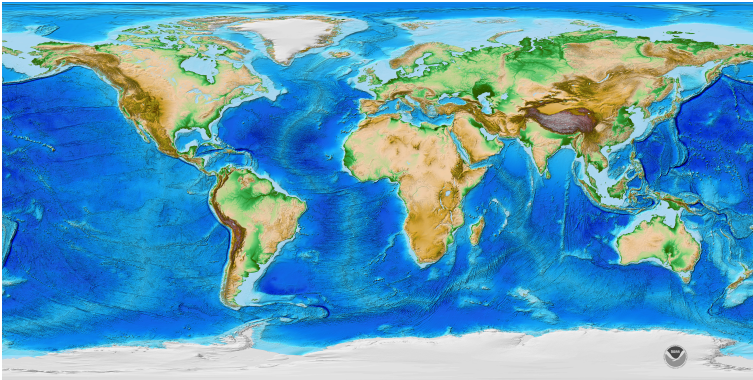
Geography is the spatial study of the earth's physical and cultural environments. Geographers study the earth's physical characteristics, inhabitants and cultures, phenomena such as climate, and the earth's place within the universe.

Geography also examines the spatial relationships between all physical and cultural phenomena in the world. Furthermore, geographers also look at how the earth, its climate, and its landscapes are changing due to cultural intervention.

Geography is a much broader field than many people realize. Most people think of area studies as the whole of geography. In reality, geography is the study of the earth, including how human activity has changed it. Geography involves much broader studies than merely understanding the shape of the earth's landforms. Physical geography involves all the planet's physical systems. Human geography incorporates studies of human culture, spatial relationships, interactions between humans and the environment, and many other research areas involving geography's different subspecialties. Students interested in a career in geography would be well served to learn geospatial techniques and gain skills and experience in GIS and

remote sensing, as they are the areas within geography where employment opportunities have grown the most over the past few decades.

Themes of Geography



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Geography helps us make sense of the world through four historical traditions. First, **spatial analysis** includes many concepts tied to geospatial technology: the study and analysis between the interactions and distribution patterns of the physical and human environments using spatial technology such as geographic information systems, satellite imagery, aerial photography and drones, global positioning systems, and more. **Earth science** includes the study of landforms, climates, and the distribution of plants and animals.

Regional studies focus on a particular region to understand the dynamics of a specific interaction between human activity and the environment. For example, researchers studying **human-landscape interaction** examine the impact of humans on their landscape and find out how different cultures have used and changed their environments. Geography provides the tools to integrate knowledge from many disciplines into a usable form by providing a sense of place to natural or human events. Geography often explains why or how something occurs in a specific location. World geography utilizes the spatial approach to help understand the components of our global community.

The discipline of geography can be broken down into three fundamental areas of focus: physical geography, human geography, and world regional geography. These fundamental areas are similar in that they use a spatial perspective and include studying place and comparing one place with another.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/worldgeography/?p=24#h5p-23>

Physical Geography

Physical geography is the spatial study of natural phenomena that make up the environment, such as rivers, mountains, landforms, weather, climate, soils, plants, and other physical aspects of the earth's surface. Physical geography focuses on geography as a form of earth science. It tends to emphasize the main physical parts of the earth – the lithosphere (surface layer), the atmosphere (air), the hydrosphere (water), and the biosphere (living organisms)—and the relationships between these parts.

Some researchers are environmental geographers, part of an emerging field that studies the spatial aspects and cultural perceptions of the natural environment. **Environmental geography** requires an understanding of both physical and human geography, as well as an understanding of how humans conceptualize their environment and the physical landscape.

The **physical landscape** is the term used to describe the natural terrain at any one place on the planet. The natural forces of erosion, weather, tectonic plate action, and water have formed the earth's physical features. Many states and national parks in the United States attempt to preserve unique physical landscapes for the public, such as Yellowstone, Yosemite, and the Grand Canyon.

Human Geography

Human geography studies human activity and its relationship to the earth's surface. Human geographers examine the spatial distribution of human populations, religions, languages, ethnicities, political systems, economics, urban dynamics, and other components of human activity. In addition, they study patterns of interaction between human cultures and various environments and focus on the causes and consequences of human settlement and distribution over the landscape. While the economic and cultural aspects of humanity are the primary focus of human geography, these aspects can only be understood by describing the landscape on which economic and cultural activities occur.

The **cultural landscape** is the term used to describe parts of the earth's surface that humans have altered or created. For example, the urban cultural landscape of a city may include buildings, streets, signs, parking lots, or vehicles. In contrast, the rural cultural landscape may consist of fields, orchards, fences, barns, or farmsteads. Cultural forces are unique to a given place – such as religion, language, ethnicity, customs, or heritage – influence the cultural landscape of that place at a given time. The cultural landscape's colors, sizes, and shapes usually symbolize some level of significance regarding societal norms. Spatial dynamics assist in identifying and evaluating cultural differences between places.

World Regional Geography

World regional geography studies various world regions as they compare with the rest of the world. Factors for comparison include both the physical and the cultural landscape. The main questions are, Who lives there? What are their lives like? What do they do for a living? Physical factors of significance can include location, climate type, and terrain. Human factors include cultural traditions, ethnicity, language, religion, economics, and politics.

World regional geography focuses on regions of various sizes across the earth's landscape and aspires to understand the unique character of regions in terms of their natural and cultural attributes. Spatial studies can play an essential role in regional geography. The scientific approach can focus on the distribution of cultural and natural phenomena within regions as delimited by various natural and cultural factors. The focus is on the spatial relationships within any field of study, such as regional economics, resource management, regional planning, and landscape ecology.

The regions studied in world regional geography can be combined into more substantial portions called realms. **Realms** are large areas of the planet, usually with multiple regions with the same general geographic location. Regions are cohesive areas within each realm.

Understanding Science



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Scientists seek to understand the fundamental principles that explain natural patterns and processes. Science is more than just a body of knowledge; science provides a means to evaluate and create new knowledge without bias. Scientists use objective evidence over subjective evidence to reach sound and logical conclusions.

Objective observation is without personal bias and the same for all individuals. Humans are naturally biased, so they cannot be completely objective; the goal is to be as unbiased as possible. A subjective observation is based on a person's feelings and beliefs and is unique to that individual.

Another way scientists avoid bias is using quantitative over qualitative measurements whenever possible. **Quantitative measurements** are an expression with a specific numerical value. **Qualitative observations** are general or relative descriptions. For example, describing a rock as red or heavy is

a qualitative observation. However, determining a rock's color by measuring wavelengths of reflected light or its density by measuring its mineral composition is quantitative. Numerical values are more precise than general descriptions and can be analyzed using statistical calculations. This is why quantitative measurements are much more helpful to scientists than qualitative observations.

It is challenging to establish truth in science because all scientific claims are falsifiable, which means any initial hypothesis may be tested and proven false. Only after exhaustively eliminating false results, competing ideas, and possible variations does a hypothesis become regarded as a reliable scientific theory. This meticulous scrutiny reveals weaknesses or flaws in a hypothesis and is the strength that supports all scientific ideas and procedures. Proving current ideas wrong has been the driving force behind many scientific careers.



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Falsifiability separates science from pseudoscience. Scientists

are wary of explanations of natural phenomena that discourage or avoid falsifiability. An explanation that cannot be tested or does not meet scientific standards is not considered a science but pseudoscience. **Pseudoscience** is a collection of ideas that may appear scientific but do not use the scientific method. Astrology is an example of pseudoscience. It is a belief system that attributes the movement of celestial bodies to influencing human behavior. Astrologers rely on celestial observations, but their conclusions are not based on experimental evidence, and their statements are not falsifiable. This is separate from astronomy, the scientific study of celestial bodies and the cosmos.

Science is also a social process. Scientists share their ideas with peers at conferences, seeking guidance and feedback. Research papers and data submitted for publication are rigorously reviewed by qualified peers and scientists who are experts in the same field. The scientific review process aims to weed out misinformation, invalid research results, and wild speculation. Thus, it is slow, cautious, and conservative.

Scientists tend to wait until a hypothesis is supported by an overwhelming amount of evidence from many independent researchers before accepting it as a scientific theory.



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Early Scientific Thought

Western scientific thought began in the ancient city of Athens, Greece. Athens was governed as a democracy, encouraging individuals to think independently when monarchies or military conquerors ruled most civilizations. Foremost among the early philosopher/scientists to use empirical thinking was Aristotle, born in 384 BCE. Empiricism emphasizes the value of evidence gained from experimentation and observation. Aristotle studied under Plato and tutored Alexander the Great. Alexander would later conquer the Persian Empire and, in the process, spread Greek culture as far east as India.

Aristotle applied an empirical method of analysis called **deductive reasoning**, which applies general principles of thought to establish new ideas or predict new outcomes. Deductive reasoning starts with generalized principles and logically extends them to new ideas or specific conclusions. If the initial principle is valid, then it is likely that the conclusion is also valid. An example of deductive reasoning is if $A=B$, and $B=C$, then $A=C$. Another example is if all birds have feathers,

and a sparrow is a bird, then a sparrow must also have feathers. The problem with deductive reasoning is that if the initial principle is flawed, the conclusion will inherit that flaw. Here is an example of a flawed initial principle leading to the wrong conclusion; if all animals that fly are birds and bats fly, then bats must also be birds.

This type of empirical thinking contrasts with **inductive reasoning**, which begins from new observations and attempts to discern underlying generalized principles. A conclusion made through inductive reasoning comes from analyzing measurable evidence rather than making a logical connection. For example, to determine whether bats are birds, a scientist might list various characteristics observed in birds—the presence of feathers, a toothless beak, hollow bones, lack of forelegs, and externally laid eggs. Next, the scientist would check whether bats share the same characteristics, and if they do not, conclude that bats are not birds.



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Both types of reasoning are consequential in science because

they emphasize the two most important aspects of science: observation and inference. Scientists test existing principles to see if they accurately infer or predict their observations. They also analyze new observations to determine if the inferred underlying principles still support them.

Both types of reasoning are consequential in science because they emphasize science's two most important aspects: observation and inference. Scientists test existing principles to see if they accurately infer or predict their observations. They also analyze new observations to determine if the underlying principles support them.

Greek culture was spread by Alexander and then absorbed by the Romans, who helped further extend Greek knowledge into Europe through their vast infrastructure of roads, bridges, and aqueducts. After the fall of the Roman Empire in 476 CE, scientific progress in Europe stalled. However, scientific thinkers of medieval times had such high regard for Aristotle's wisdom and knowledge that they faithfully followed his logical approach to understanding nature for centuries. By contrast, science in the Middle East flourished and grew between 800 and 1450 CE, along with culture and the arts.

Near the end of the medieval period, empirical experimentation became more common in Europe. During the Renaissance, which lasted from the 14th through 17th centuries, artistic and scientific thought experienced a great awakening. European scholars began to criticize the traditional Aristotelian approach. By the end of the Renaissance period,

empiricism was poised to become a vital component of the scientific revolution that would arise in the 17th century.

An early example of how Renaissance scientists began to apply a modern empirical approach is their study of the solar system. In the second century, the Greek astronomer Claudius Ptolemy observed the Sun, Moon, and stars moving across the sky. Applying Aristotelian logic to his astronomical calculations, he deductively reasoned that all celestial bodies orbited around the earth, which was located at the center of the universe. Ptolemy was a highly regarded mathematician, and the scientific community widely accepted his mathematical calculations. The view of the cosmos with the earth at its center is called the geocentric model. This geocentric model persisted until the Renaissance when some revolutionary thinkers challenged the centuries-old hypothesis.

By contrast, early Renaissance scholars such as astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) proposed an alternative explanation for the perceived movement of the Sun, Moon, and stars. Sometime between 1507 and 1515, he provided a credible mathematical proof for a radically new model of the cosmos, one in which the earth and other planets orbited around a centrally located Sun. After the invention of the telescope in 1608, scientists used their enhanced astronomical observations to support this heliocentric, Sun-centered model. Two scientists, Johannes Kepler and Galileo Galilei are credited with jump-starting the scientific revolution. They

accomplished this by building on Copernicus' work and challenging long-established ideas about nature and science.



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Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) was a German mathematician and astronomer who expanded on the heliocentric model—improving Copernicus' original calculations and describing the planetary motion as elliptical paths. Galileo Galilei (1564 – 1642) was an Italian astronomer who used the newly developed telescope to observe Jupiter's four largest moons. This was the first direct evidence to contradict the geocentric model since moons orbiting Jupiter could not also be orbiting the earth.

Galileo strongly supported the heliocentric model and attacked the geocentric model, arguing for a more scientific approach to determine an idea's credibility. Because of this, he found himself at odds with prevailing scientific views and the Catholic Church. In 1633 he was found guilty of heresy and placed under house arrest, where he would remain until his death in 1642.

Galileo is regarded as the first modern scientist because he conducted experiments that would prove or disprove falsifiable ideas and based his conclusions on mathematical analysis of quantifiable evidence—a radical departure from the deductive thinking of Greek philosophers such as Aristotle [15; 18]. His methods marked the beginning of a significant shift in how scientists studied the natural world, with an increasing number relying on evidence and experimentation to form their hypotheses. During this revolutionary time, geologists such as James Hutton and Nicolas Steno made significant scientific advances.



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The Scientific Method

This has a long history in human thought but was first fully formed by Ibn al-Haytham over 1,000 years ago. At the forefront of the scientific method are conclusions based on objective evidence, not opinion or hearsay.



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Modern science is based on the **scientific method**, which follows these steps. It should be noted that each scientific discipline will follow this process slightly differently to align with their methodology.

Step 1: Observation, Problem, or Research Question

The procedure begins with identifying a problem or research question, such as a natural or social phenomenon that needs to be explained in the scientific community's collective knowledge. This step usually involves reviewing the scientific literature to understand previous studies that may be related to the question.

Step 2: Hypothesis

Once the problem or question is well defined, the scientist proposes a possible answer and **hypothesis** before conducting

an experiment or fieldwork. This hypothesis must be specific, falsifiable, and based on other scientific work.

Scientists often develop multiple working hypotheses because they must impose strict experimental controls or have limited opportunities to visit a field location.

Step 3: Experiment and Hypothesis Revision

The next step is developing a **scientific experiment** that either supports or refutes the hypothesis. Many people mistakenly think experiments are only done in a lab; however, an experiment can consist of observing natural processes in the field. Regardless of an experiment's form, it always includes systematically gathering objective data. This data is interpreted to determine whether it contradicts or supports the hypothesis, which may be revised and tested again. When a hypothesis holds up under experimentation, it is ready to be shared with other experts in the field.

Step 4: Peer Review and Publication

Scientists share the results of their research by publishing articles in scientific journals such as *Science* and *Nature*. Reputable journals and publishing houses will only publish an experimental study once they have determined that its methods are scientifically rigorous and the conclusions are

supported by evidence. Before an article is published, it undergoes a rigorous peer review by scientific experts scrutinizing the methods, results, and discussion. Once an article is published, other scientists may attempt to replicate the results. This replication is necessary to confirm the reliability of the study's reported results. A hypothesis that seemed compelling in one study might be proven false in studies conducted by other scientists. New technology can be applied to published studies, which can help confirm or reject once-accepted ideas and hypotheses.

Step 5: Theory Development

In casual conversation, the word theory implies guesswork or speculation. In the language of science, an explanation or conclusion made into a theory carries much more weight because it is supported by experimental verification and widely accepted by the scientific community. After a hypothesis has been repeatedly tested for falsifiability through documented and independent studies, it eventually becomes a **scientific theory**.

While a hypothesis provides a tentative explanation before an experiment, a theory is the best explanation after being confirmed by multiple independent experiments.

Confirmation of a theory may take years or even longer. For example, the continental drift hypothesis, first proposed by Alfred Wegener in 1912, was initially dismissed. After decades

of additional evidence collection by other scientists using more advanced technology, Wegener's hypothesis was accepted and revised as the theory of plate tectonics.

The theory of evolution by natural selection is another example. Originating from the work of Charles Darwin in the mid-19th century, the theory of evolution has withstood generations of scientific testing for falsifiability. While it has been updated and revised to accommodate knowledge gained by modern technologies, the theory of evolution continues to be supported by the latest evidence.



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Science Denial and Evaluating Sources

Introductory science courses usually deal with accepted scientific theory and do not include opposing ideas, even though these alternate ideas may be credible. This makes it easier for students to understand complex material. However,

advanced students will encounter more controversies as they continue to study their discipline.

Some groups argue that some established scientific theories need to be corrected, not based on their scientific merit but on the group's ideology. This section focuses on identifying evidence-based information and differentiating it from **pseudoscience**.

Science Denial

Science denial happens when people argue that established scientific theories are wrong, not based on scientific merit but on subjective ideology – for social, political, or economic reasons. Organizations and people use science denial as a rhetorical argument against issues or ideas they oppose.



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Among these, denial of climate change is strongly connected with geography. A climate denier denies explicitly or doubts the objective conclusions of climate scientists. Science denial

generally uses three false arguments. The first argument tries to undermine the credibility of the scientific conclusion by claiming the research methods are flawed or the theory is not universally accepted—the science is unsettled. The notion that scientific ideas are not absolute creates doubt for non-scientists; however, a lack of universal truths should not be confused with scientific uncertainty. Because science is based on falsifiability, scientists avoid claiming universal truths and use language that conveys uncertainty. This allows scientific ideas to change and evolve as more evidence is uncovered.

The second argument claims that the researchers are not objective and are motivated by ideology or economic agenda. This is an *ad hominem* argument in which a person's character is attacked instead of the merit of their argument. They claim results have been manipulated so researchers can justify asking for more funding. They claim that because a federal grant funds the researchers, they use their results to lobby for expanded government regulation.

The third argument demands a balanced view, equal time in media coverage, and educational curricula to engender the false illusion of two equally valid arguments. Science deniers frequently demand equal coverage of their proposals, even when little scientific evidence supports their ideology. For example, science deniers might demand religious explanations to be taught as an alternative to the well-established theory of evolution. Alternatively, all possible causes of climate change are discussed as equally probable, regardless of the body of

evidence. Conclusions derived using the scientific method should be distinct from those based on ideologies.



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Furthermore, conclusions about the natural or cultural environments derived from ideologies have no place in scientific research and education. For example, teaching the flat earth model in modern geography or earth science courses would be inappropriate. Unfortunately, widespread scientific illiteracy allows these arguments to suppress scientific knowledge and spread misinformation.

Forming new conclusions based on the scientific method is the only way to change scientific conclusions. We would not teach “flat earth” in a physical geography course because Flat Earthers need to follow the scientific method. The fact that scientists avoid universal truths and change their ideas as more evidence is uncovered should not mean that science is unsettled. Because of widespread scientific illiteracy, these arguments are used by those who wish to suppress science and misinform the public.



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Evaluating Sources of Information

In the age of the internet, information is plentiful. Geographers or anyone exploring scientific inquiry must discern reliable sources of information from pseudoscience and misinformation. This evaluation is especially critical in scientific research because scientific knowledge is respected for its reliability. Textbooks such as this one can aid this complex and crucial task. At its roots, quality information comes from the scientific method, beginning with the empirical thinking of Aristotle. The application of the scientific method helps produce unbiased results. A valid inference or interpretation is based on objective evidence or data. Credible data and inferences are clearly labeled, separated, and differentiated. Anyone looking over the data can understand how the author's conclusion was derived or come to an alternative conclusion.

Scientific procedures are clearly defined, so the investigation can be replicated to confirm the original results or expanded further to produce new results. These measures make a scientific inquiry valid and its use as a source reputable. Of course, substandard work occasionally slips through, and retractions are published from time to time. An infamous article linking the MMR vaccine to autism appeared in the highly reputable journal, *The Lancet*, in 1998. Journalists discovered that the author had multiple conflicts of interest and fabricated data, and the article was retracted in 2010.

In addition to methodology, data, and results, the authors of a study should be investigated. The author(s) should be investigated when looking into any research. An author's credibility is based on multiple factors, such as having a degree in a relevant topic or being funded by an unbiased source.

The same rigor should be applied to evaluating the publisher, ensuring the results reported come from an unbiased process. The publisher should be easy to discover. Good publishers will show the latest papers in the journal and make their contact information and identification clear.

Reputable journals show their peer-review style. Some journals are predatory, where they use unexplained and unnecessary fees to submit and access journals. Reputable journals have recognizable editorial boards. Often, a reputable journal will associate with a trade, association, or recognized open-source initiative.

One of the hallmarks of scientific research is **scientific peer**

review. Research should be transparent to peer review. This allows the **scientific community** to reproduce experimental results, correct and retract errors, and validate theories. This allows the reproduction of experimental results, corrections of errors, and proper justification of the research to experts.

Citation is imperative to avoid plagiarism and allows readers to investigate an author's line of thought and conclusions. Confirming that the citations are from reputable scientific research is essential when reading scientific works. Most often, scientific citations are used to reference paraphrasing rather than quotes. The number of times a work is cited is said to measure the investigation within the scientific community, although this technique is inherently biased.

Careers in Geography and GIS

Geography is not a discipline of endlessly memorizing capitals, countries, rivers, mountain ranges, and more. The discipline is scientifically analyzing the spatial and temporal distribution, connections, and patterns of our physical and cultural environments.

The following information on careers in geography is from the Association of American Geographers (AAG) website, which is a resource for those interested in pursuing employment in the field of geography.

Many occupations require knowledge of and skills in

geography. Geographers work in many different areas, such as environmental management, education, disaster response, city and county planning, community development, and more. Geography is an interdisciplinary field that offers diverse career opportunities.

Many geographers pursue rewarding careers in business; local, state, or federal government agencies, nonprofit organizations; and schools. Geographers with graduate (master's and doctorate) degrees may become educators in higher education (community colleges and universities).



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Because of modern location technology such as GPS, web-based mapping technology, satellite imagery, and now small unmanned aerial systems – also known as drones – careers in geospatial technology are exploding. The U.S. Department of Labor, in partnership with the National Geospatial Technology Center for Excellence, has created the Geospatial Technology Competency Model (GTCM) as a way to have industry help determine what knowledge and skillsets are

needed to be successful in this career path. The global leader in GIS, Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), has created a great resource of industries that use geospatial technology.



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1.3 LOCATIONS AND REGIONS ON EARTH

The first step in identifying a region or location on the earth is understanding its relative and absolute locations. **Relative location** is the location on the earth's surface concerning other places, considering features such as transportation access or terrain. Relative location helps one compare the advantages of one location with those of another. **Absolute location**, on the other hand, refers to an exact point on the earth's surface without regard to its relation to any other place. Absolute location is vital to the cartographic process and human activities, requiring an agreed-upon method of identifying a place or point.

The earth is 360 degrees and is measured using a grid pattern called the **graticule**. Lines of **latitude** and **longitude** allow any absolute location on the planet to have an identifiable address of degrees north or south and east or west, enabling geographers to locate, measure, and study spatial activity accurately. Geographers and cartographers organize locations on the earth using a series of imaginary lines that encircle the globe.

The two primary lines are the equator and the prime meridian. The systems of longitude and latitude are formed

from these lines, allowing users to locate themselves anywhere on the planet. The line is the longest when one travels along in an east-west direction. At the equator, the sun is directly overhead at noon on the two equinoxes, which occur in March and September.



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Latitude and Parallels

The **equator** is the largest circle of latitude on earth. The equator divides the earth into the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, called 0 degrees latitude. The other lines of latitude are numbered from 0 to 90 degrees, going toward each of the poles. The lines north of the equator toward the North Pole are north latitude, and each number is followed by the letter “N.” The lines south of the equator toward the South Pole are south latitude, and the letter “S follows each of the numbers.” The equator (0 latitude) is the only line of latitude without any letter following the number. Notice that

all lines of latitude are parallel to the equator (often called parallels) and that the North Pole equals 90 degrees N. The South Pole equals 90 degrees S. Noted parallels include the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn, 23.5 degrees from the equator. At 66.5 degrees from the equator are the Arctic Circle and the Antarctic Circle near the North and South Pole, respectively.

Longitude and Meridians

The **prime meridian** sits at 0 degrees longitude and divides the earth into the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. The prime meridian is defined as an imaginary line that runs through the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, England, a suburb of London. The Eastern Hemisphere includes the continents of Europe, Asia, and Australia, while the Western Hemisphere includes North and South America. All meridians (lines of longitude) east of the prime meridian (0 and 180) are numbered from 1 to 180 degrees east (E); the lines west of the prime meridian (0 and 180) are numbered from 1 to 180 degrees west (W). The 0 and 180 lines do not have a letter attached to them. The meridian at 180 degrees is called the **International Date Line**. The International Date Line (180 degrees longitude) is opposite the prime meridian and indicates the start of each day. Each day officially starts at 12:01 a.m. at the International Date Line. Do not confuse

the International Date Line with the prime meridian (0 longitude). The actual International Date Line does not follow the 180-degree meridian exactly. Several alterations have been made to the International Date Line to accommodate political agreements to include an island or country on one side of the line or another.

Climate and Latitude

The earth is tilted on its axis at 23.5 degrees. As it rotates around the sun, the tilt of the earth's axis provides different climatic seasons because of the variations in the angle of direct sunlight on the planet. Places receiving more direct sunlight experience a warmer climate. Elsewhere, the increased angle of incoming solar radiation near the earth's poles results in more reflected sunlight and a colder climate. The Northern Hemisphere experiences winter when sunlight is reflected off the earth's surface, and less of the sun's energy is absorbed from the sun's sharper angle.

The **Tropic of Cancer** is parallel at 23.5 degrees north of the equator, the most northerly place on earth, receiving direct sunlight during the Northern Hemisphere's summer. Remember that the earth is tilted 23.5 degrees, which accounts for seasonal variations in climate. The **Tropic of Capricorn** is parallel at 23.5 degrees south of the equator and is the most

southerly location on earth, receiving direct sunlight during the Southern Hemisphere's summer.

The tropics (Cancer and Capricorn) are the two imaginary lines directly above which the sun shines on the two **solstices**, which occur on or near June 20 or 21 (summer solstice in the Northern Hemisphere) and December 21 or 22 (winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere). The sun is directly above the Tropic of Cancer at noon on June 20 or 21, marking the beginning of summer in the Northern Hemisphere and winter in the Southern Hemisphere. The sun is directly above the Tropic of Capricorn at noon on December 21 or 22, marking the beginning of winter in the Northern Hemisphere and summer in the Southern Hemisphere. Solstices are the extreme ends of the seasons when the line of direct sunlight is either the farthest north or the farthest south it ever goes. The region between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn is known as the tropics. This area does not experience dramatic seasonal changes because the amount of direct sunlight received does not vary widely. However, the higher latitudes (north of the Tropic of Cancer and south of the Tropic of Capricorn) experience significant seasonal variation in climate.



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The **Arctic Circle** is a latitude line at 66.5 degrees north. It is the farthest point north that receives sunlight during its winter season ($90^\circ \text{ N} - 23.5^\circ = 66.5^\circ \text{ N}$). During winter, the North Pole is away from the sun and does not receive much sunlight. At times, it is dark for most of the twenty-four-hour day. During the Northern Hemisphere's summer, the North Pole faces more toward the sun and may receive sunlight for extended periods of the 24-hour day. The **Antarctic Circle** is the corresponding line of latitude at 66.5 degrees south. It is the farthest location south that receives sunlight during the winter season in the Southern Hemisphere ($90^\circ \text{ S} - 23.5^\circ = 66.5^\circ \text{ S}$). It is winter in the north and summer in the south.

The Arctic and Antarctic Circles mark the extremities (southern and northern, respectively) of the polar day (twenty-four-hour sunlit day) and the polar night (24-hour sunless night). North of the Arctic Circle, the sun is above the horizon for twenty-four continuous hours at least once per year and below the horizon for twenty-four continuous hours per year. This is true also near the Antarctic Circle, but it occurs south of the Antarctic Circle, toward the South Pole. **Equinoxes**, when the line of direct sunlight hits the equator and days and

nights are of equal length, occur in the spring and fall on or around March 20 or 21 and September 22 or 23.

Time Zones

Universal Time (U.T.), Coordinated Universal Time (UTC), Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), or Zulu Time (Z): all four terms can be defined as the local time at 0 degrees longitude, which is the prime meridian (location of Greenwich, England). This is the same time under which many military operations, international radio broadcasts, and air traffic control systems operate worldwide. UTC is set in zero- to twenty-four-hour periods instead of two twelve-hour periods (a.m. and p.m.). The designations of a.m. and p.m. are relative to the central meridian: a.m. refers to ante meridiem, or “before noon,” and p.m. refers to post meridiem, or “afternoon.” U.T., UTC, GMT, and Z all refer to the same twenty-four-hour time system that unifies a standard time regarding global operations. For example, all air flights use the twenty-four-hour time system so the pilots can coordinate flights across time zones and around the world.

The earth rotates on its axis once every twenty-four hours at the rate of 15 degrees per hour ($15 \times 24 = 360$). **Time zones** are established roughly every 15 degrees longitude, so local times correspond to similar hours of day and night. With this system, the sun is generally overhead at noon in every

time zone that follows the 15-degree-wide system. The twenty-four time zones are based on the prime meridian regarding Universal Coordinated Time (UTC), Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), or Zulu Time (Z), which all operate on the twenty-four-hour time clock. Local time zones are either plus or minus, determined by the distance from the prime meridian.

The 15-degree time zone problem is that the zones do not necessarily follow state, regional, or local boundaries. The result is that time zones are seldom precisely 15 degrees wide and usually have various boundary lines. In the United States, the boundaries between the different time zones are inconsistent with the lines of longitude; in some cases, time zones zigzag to follow state lines or to keep cities within a single time zone. Other countries address the problem differently. China, for example, is a significant inland area like the United States yet operates in the only one-time zone for the entire country.



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1.4 CULTURE

The term culture is often challenging to differentiate from the term ethnicity. In this textbook, **ethnicity** indicates traits people are born with, including genetic backgrounds, physical features, or birthplaces. People have little choice in matters of ethnicity. **Culture** indicates what people learn after birth, including language, religion, and customs or traditions. Individuals can change matters of culture by individual choice after they are born. These two terms help us identify human patterns and understand a country's driving forces.



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Culture and ethnicity might also be confused with **ethnic cleansing**, which refers to the forced removal of people from their homeland by a more potent force of different people. Ethnic cleansing might indicate two distinct ethnic groups:

one driving the other out of their homeland and taking it over. On the other hand, ethnic cleansing might also be technically cultural cleansing if the aggressor and the group drove out are of the same ethnicity but hold different cultural values, such as religion or language. The term ethnic cleansing has been used to describe either case. **Genocide** is the deliberate and systematic extermination of a national, racial, political, or cultural group.

Languages of the World

Language is the communication mode of human culture and represents the complete diversity of thought, literature, and the arts. It is estimated that roughly seven thousand languages are spoken worldwide today but decreasing. About a dozen are spoken by more than one hundred million people each. These are the world's main languages used in the most populous countries. However, most of the world's languages are spoken by a relatively small number of people. Many languages have no written form and are spoken by a declining number of people. Due to globalization, language experts estimate that one-third or more of the world's languages are endangered (with fewer than 1,000 speakers remaining). At the same time, just twenty-three languages account for more than half of the world's population. New languages form when populations live in isolation. In the current era, as the world's populations

are increasingly interacting, languages are being abandoned, and their speakers are switching to other tongues.



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There are nine dominant language families in the world. Each of the languages within a language family shares a common ancestral language. As populations migrated from their ancestral homeland, their language evolved and separated into many new languages. The three largest language groups of the Indo-European family used in Europe are the Germanic, Romance, and Slavic groups. Other Indo-European languages include Hindi (spoken in India) and Persian (spoken in Iran).



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Language Characteristics

The **official language** is a country's language that is on record to be used for all its official government purposes. For example, the official language in India is Hindi, though the lingua franca is English, and several local languages may be spoken.

An **accent** is the pronunciation of words in a language that differs from that used by a different group of the same language. For example, people in Mississippi pronounce words differently from North Dakota, but the differences are less severe than in dialects.

A **pidgin** is a simplified language used to communicate between two or more groups that do not have a language in common. For example, Residents of New Guinea mix English words with their language to create a new language that can bridge speakers of different local language groups. Though the words are in English, the grammar and sentence structure are mixed according to local vocabulary. There are many English-based pidgin languages around the world.

Creole languages arise from contact between two other languages and have features of both. However, Creole is a pidgin that has become the primary language people speak at home. Creole languages are often developed in colonial settings as a dialect of the colonial language (usually French or English). For example, in the former French colony of Haiti, a French-based creole language was developed that people speak

at home. At the same time, French is typically used for professional purposes.

A **dead language** is no longer used for local communication. For example, Latin is no longer used by local people to communicate but is still used by the Roman Catholic Church in some of its services.

Dialects are a regional variety of a language that uses different grammar or pronunciation. Examples include American English versus British English. Linguists suggest three main English language dialects in the United States: a Southern dialect, a Midland dialect, and a Northern dialect. However, television and public media communication have focused on more uniform speech patterns that have diminished the differences between these three dialects.

An **isolated language** is one not connected to any other language on earth. For example, Basque is not connected to any other language and is only spoken in the region of the Pyrenees between Spain and France.

A **lingua franca** is a second language used commercially for others outside a language group but not in their personal life.

Slang is the local use of informal words or phrases that are not part of the official language. For example, many musicians use slang in their lyrics.



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Religions of the World

Religious geography studies the distribution of religions and their relationship to their place of origin. Religious geographers recognize three main types of religions: **universal** (or *universalizing*), **ethnic** (or *cultural*), and **tribal** (or *traditional*) religions. Universal religions include Christianity, Islam, and various forms of Buddhism. These religions attempt to gain worldwide acceptance and appeal to all types of people, actively looking for new members or converts. Ethnic religions appeal to a single ethnic group or culture. These religions do not actively seek out converts. Broader ethnic religions include Judaism, Shintoism, Hinduism, and Chinese religions that embrace Confucianism and Taoism. Finally, traditional religions involve the belief in some form of supernatural power that people can appeal to for help, including ancestor worship and the belief in spirits that live in various aspects of nature, such as trees, mountaintops, and

streams (this is often called **animism**). Subsaharan Africa is home to many traditional religions.

Although the world's primary religions are listed here, many other religions are practiced worldwide, as well as many variations of the religions outlined here. The top five religions by population are Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Because the official doctrine of Communism is nonreligious or atheist, there are many more followers of Buddhism in China than demographic listings indicate. The percentage of the world's population that follows Buddhism is probably much higher than the 6 percent often listed for this religion.



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Christianity and Islam originated from Judaism in the eastern Mediterranean and the Arabian Peninsula. Both monotheistic religions look to the Jewish patriarch Abraham as a founding personage. **Christianity**, based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, who lived in Palestine in the first century C.E., spread rapidly through the Roman Empire. **Islam** is based

on the teachings of Muhammad, a seventh-century religious and political figure who lived on the Arabian Peninsula. Islam spread rapidly across North Africa, east across southern Asia, and north to Europe centuries after Muhammad's death.

Buddhism is a religion or way of life based on the teachings and life of Siddhartha Gautama, who lived in India/Nepal around the fifth century BCE. Buddhism has three branches: southern or Theravada Buddhism, eastern or Mahayana Buddhism, and northern or Vajrayana (Tibetan) Buddhism.

Hinduism, a religious tradition on the Indian subcontinent, is one of the oldest major religions still practiced globally. It may date back to as far as 2000 BCE or earlier. Unlike other world religions, Hinduism has no founder and is a conglomerate of diverse beliefs and traditions. Hinduism has a large body of scripture, including the Vedas, the Upanishads, and epic tales such as the Mahabharata and the Ramayana.

Sikhism, a religion founded in the Punjab region of southern Asia, is a monotheistic religion centered on justice and faith. High importance is placed on the principle of equality between all people. The writings of former gurus are the basis for the religion.

Judaism is the religion of the Jewish people, whose traditions and ethics are embodied in the Jewish religious texts, the Tanakh and the Talmud. According to Jewish tradition, Judaism began with the covenant between God and Abraham around 2000 BCE.

Shintoism is a dominant ethnic religion in Japan focused

on worshipping kami, which are spirits of places, things, and processes.

Confucianism and **Taoism** are ethnic Chinese religions based on morality and the teachings of religious scholars such as Confucius.

In this TED Talk by Hans Rosling, the popular statistician wanted to know the connection between world religions and global population growth.



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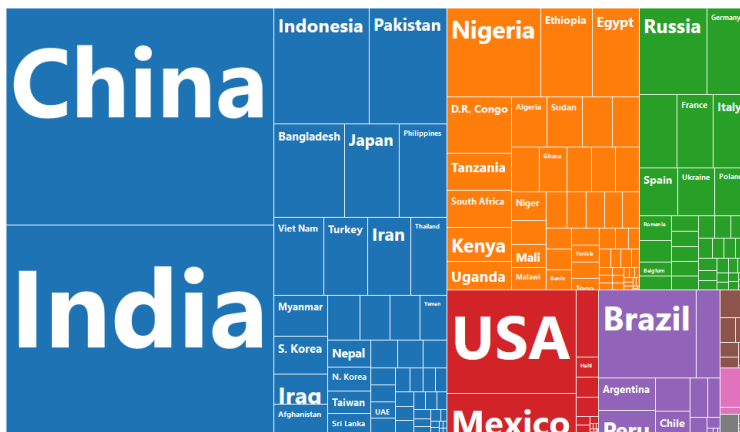
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In this TED Talk by Hans Rosling, the popular statistician wanted to know the connection between world religions and global population growth.

1.5 POPULATION

Demography is the study of how human populations change over time and space. It is a branch of human geography related to **population geography**, which examines the spatial distribution of human populations. Geographers study how populations grow and migrate, how people are distributed worldwide, and how these distributions change over time.

Total: 7,794,798,729



“Population Pyramid of the United States of America 2019” from PopulationPyramid.net is under CC BY 3.0 IGO license.

For most of human history, relatively few people lived on earth, and the world population grew slowly. Only about five hundred million people lived on the entire planet in 1650 (less

than half of India's population in 2000). Things changed dramatically during Europe's Industrial Revolution in the late 1700s and into the 1800s when declining death rates due to improved nutrition and sanitation allowed more people to survive to adulthood and reproduce. As a result, the population of Europe grew rapidly. However, by the middle of the twentieth century, birth rates in developed countries declined, as children had become a financial liability rather than an economic asset to families. Fewer families worked in agriculture, more families lived in urban areas, and women delayed the age of marriage to pursue education, resulting in a decline in family size and a slowing of population growth. In some countries (e.g., Russia and Japan), the population is in decline, and the average age in developed countries has been rising for decades. The process just described is called the **demographic transition**.



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At the beginning of the twentieth century, the world's population was about 1.6 billion. One hundred years later,

there were roughly six billion people worldwide; as of 2011, the number was approaching seven billion. This rapid growth occurred as the demographic transition spread from developed countries to the rest of the world. During the twentieth century, death rates due to disease and malnutrition decreased in nearly every corner of the globe. In developing countries with agricultural societies, however, birth rates remained high. Low death rates and high birth rates resulted in rapid population growth.

Meanwhile, birth rates and family sizes have declined in most developing countries as people leave agricultural professions and move to urban areas. This means that population growth rates, while still higher in the developing world than in the developed world, are declining. Although the exact figures are unknown, demographers expect the world's population to stabilize by 2100 and decline somewhat.



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The world's population growth rate has been mostly occurring in developing countries, whereas populations are stable or

declining in Europe and North America. World population increase is pronounced on the continent of Asia: China and India are the most populous countries in the world, each with more than a billion people, and Pakistan is an emerging population giant with a high rate of population growth. The continent of Africa has the highest fertility rates in the world. The most striking paradox within population studies is that while there has been a decline in fertility (a declining family size) in developing countries, the world's population will grow substantially by 2030 because of the compounding effect of a large number of people already in the world. Even though population growth rates are in decline in many countries, the population is still growing. A small growth rate on a broad base population still results in the birth of many millions of people.

As of January 2023, the United States Census Bureau estimates that the world population is reached 8 billion, with a growth rate of roughly 1.07 percent, or roughly 82 million people per year. The world population reached 6 billion in 1999 and 7 billion in 2011. If the current growth rate continues, the human population will reach 8 billion by 2023 and hopefully level off at roughly 10 billion by 2055. Between 2010 and 2050, world population growth will be generated exclusively in developing countries.



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The world's three most significant population clusters are the regions of eastern China, South Asia, and Europe. Southeast Asia also has large population clusters. Additional large population centers exist in various countries with high urbanization. An example is the urbanized region between Boston and Washington, DC, which includes New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and neighboring metropolitan areas, often called megalopoleis. The coastal country of Nigeria in West Africa and the island of Java in Indonesia are good examples of large population clusters centered in the tropics.

Social and environmental dynamics and geography will determine where humanity will live. Providing food, energy, and materials in areas where populations continue to grow will tax many countries, and poverty, malnutrition, and disease are expected to increase in regions with poor sanitation, limited clean water, and a lack of economic resources. According to the World Bank, extreme poverty had declined for over three decades. But when the pandemic hit in 2020, that trend changed for the worst. The number of people in extreme poverty rose from 70 million to more than 700 million. The

global extreme poverty rate reached 9.3 percent, up from 8.4 percent in 2019. However, in 2022, the world population passed 8 billion. Moreover, the planet's carrying capacity is not and cannot be known. How many humans can the earth sustain indefinitely? We may have already reached the threshold of its **carrying capacity**.

The human population will continue to grow until it either crashes due to the depletion of resources or stabilizes at a sustainable carrying capacity. Population growth exacts a toll on the earth as more people use more environmental resources. The areas most immediately affected by increased populations include forests (a fuel resource and a source of building material), freshwater supplies, and agricultural soils. These systems get overtaxed, and their depletion has serious consequences. Type C climates, moderate and temperate, are usually the most productive and are already vulnerable to severe deforestation, water pollution, and soil erosion. Maintaining adequate food supplies will be critical to supporting a sustainable carrying capacity. The ability to transport food supplies quickly and safely is a significant component of managing the conservation of resources. Deforestation by humans using wood for cooking fuel is already a severe concern in arid type B climates.



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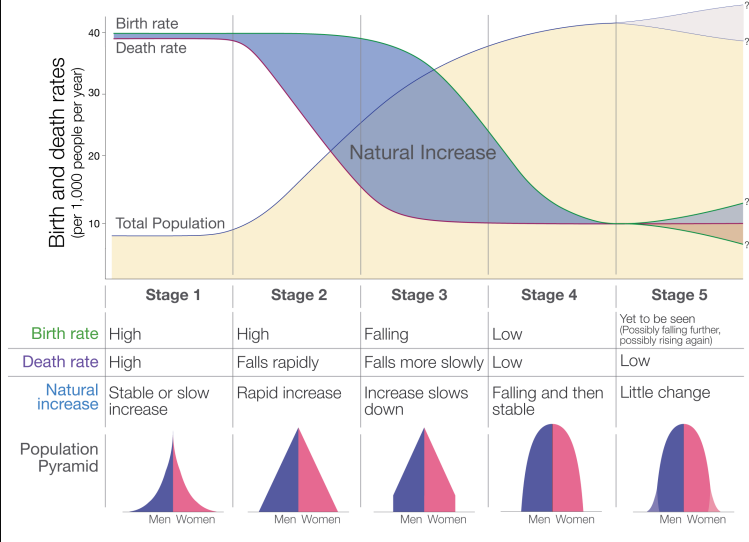
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Population Demographics

The Industrial Revolution, which prompted the shift in population from rural to urban, also encouraged market economies, which have evolved into modern consumer societies. Various theories and models have been developed to help explain these changes. For example, in 1929, the American demographer Warren Thompson developed the **Demographic Transition Model (DTM)** to explain population growth based on an interpretation of demographic history. A revised version of Thomson's model outlines five stages of the demographic transition from traditional rural societies to modern urban societies.

The five stages of the demographic transition

The demographic transition is a model that describes why rapid population growth is a temporary phenomenon.



“The Five Stages of the Demographic Transition” from Our World in Data is CC BY-SA 4.0 license. [Click on the image to go to the source.](#)

Stage 1: Low Growth Rate

Humans have lived in the first stage of the DTM for most of our existence. In this first stage, CBRs and CDRs fluctuated wildly regionally, globally, and over time because of living conditions, food output, environmental conditions, war, and disease. Ultimately, the natural increase of the world was stable because CBRs and CDRs were about equal. However, around 8,000 BC, the world’s population grew dramatically due to the agricultural revolution. During this time, humans learned to

domesticate plants and animals for personal use and became less reliant on hunting and gathering for sustenance. This allowed for more stable food production and allowed village populations to grow. However, war and disease prevented population growth from occurring globally.

Stage 2: High Growth Rate

Around the mid-1700s, global populations grew ten times faster than in the past because of the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution brought with it a variety of technological improvements in agricultural production and food supply. Increased wealth in Europe and later North America because the Industrial Revolution meant more money and resources could be devoted to medicine, medical technology, water sanitation, and personal hygiene. Sewer systems were installed in cities; thus, public health improved. All of this dramatically caused CDRs to drop around the world. At first, CBRs stayed high as CDRs dropped, causing populations to increase in Europe and North America. Over time, this would change.

Africa, Asia, and Latin America moved into Stage 2 of the demographic transition model 200 years later for different reasons than their European and North American counterparts. First, the medicine created in Europe and North America was brought into these developing nations creating what is now called the medical revolution. This revolution or

diffusion of medicine to this region caused death rates to drop quickly. However, while the medical revolution reduced death rates, it did not bring with it the wealth and improved living conditions, and development that the Industrial Revolution created. As a result, global population growth is most significant in the regions still in Stage 2.

Stage 3: Moderate Growth Rate

Today, Europe and North America have moved to Stage 3 of the demographic transition model. A nation moves from Stage 2 to Stage 3 when CBRs begin to drop while CDRs remain low or continue to fall. It should be noted that the natural rate of increase in nations within Stage 3 is moderate because CBRs are somewhat higher than CDRs. The United States, Canada, and European nations entered this stage in the early 20th century. Latin American nations entered this stage later in the century.

Advances in technology and medicine cause a decrease in IMR and overall CDR during Stage 2. Social and economic changes bring about a decrease in CBR during Stage 3. Countries that begin to acquire wealth tend to have fewer children as they move away from rural-based development structures toward urban-based structures because more children survive in childhood. As a result, the need for large families for agricultural work decreases. Additionally, women gained more legal rights and chose to enter the workforce, own

property, and have fewer children as nations moved into Stage 3.

Stage 4: Return to Low Growth Rate

A country enters Stage 4 of the demographic transition model when CBRs equal to or become less than CDRs. When CBRs are equal to CDRs, a nation will experience zero population growth (ZPG). This occurs in many countries where girls do not live as long as they reach their childbearing age due to gender inequality.

A country in the first two stages of the transition model will have a broad base of young people and a smaller proportion of older people. A country in Stage 4 will have a much smaller base of young people (fewer children) but a much larger population of elderly (decreased CDR). A country with a large youth population is more likely to be rural with high birthrates and possibly high death rates, helping geographers analyze a nation's health care system. Moreover, a country in Stage 4 with a large elderly population will have fewer young people supporting the economy. These two examples represent the **dependency ratio** mentioned earlier in this chapter. This ratio is the number of young and older adults dependent on the working force.

Human geographers like to focus on the following demographic groups: 0-14 years old, 15-64 years old, and 65

and older. Individuals ages 0-14 and over 65 are considered dependents (though this is changing in older generations). One-third of all young people live in developing nations. Moreover, this places considerable strain on those nations' infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals, and daycare. Older individuals in more developed nations (MDL) benefit from health care services but require more help and resources from the government and the economy.

Another ratio geographers look at is the number of males compared to females, called the **sex ratio**. Globally, more males are born than females, but males have a higher death rate than females. However, understanding a country's sex and dependency ratios helps human geographers analyze fertility rates and natural increases. As noted earlier, population growth has increased dramatically in the last century. However, every country is still in Stage 1, and only a few have moved into Stage 4. Most of the world is either in Stage 2 or 3, which both have higher CBRs than CDRs, creating a human population of over 7.5 billion today.

Stage 5: Population Decline

Many demographers believe a new stage in the DTM should be added to address issues starting to develop in countries within Europe and Japan. In this final stage, CBR would be extremely low and an increasing CDR. This would cause the area's NIR to be negative, leading to declining population growth. This

may create an enormous strain on a country's social safety net programs as it tries to support older citizens who are no longer working and contributing to the economy.



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Urbanization and Family Size

As countries move from an agricultural to an industrial economy, there is a significant shift in population from rural to urban settings. The Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century ushered in significant technological developments and changes in labor practices, which encouraged migration from the farm to the city. Because of increased mechanization, fewer farm workers are needed to produce larger agricultural yields. At the same time, factories in urban areas greatly need industrial workers. This shift continued into the information age of the late twentieth century and continues in many parts of the developing world in the current century.

A fundamental principle of population growth that

addresses this rural-to-urban shift states that as countries industrialize and urbanize, family size typically decreases, and incomes traditionally increase. Though this may not be true in all cases, it is a general principle consistent across cultural lines. Agricultural regions generally have a larger average family size than their city counterparts. The **fertility rate** is the average number of children a woman in a particular country has in her lifetime, whether or not they all live to adulthood. If a given country's fertility rate is less than 2.1 (the replacement level), the population of that country is in decline unless there is significant immigration. A fertility rate above 2.1 indicates that the country's population is increasing. Some children will never reach reproductive age nor have children of their own, so the replacement rate has to be slightly higher than 2. The concept of fertility rate is slightly different from the term family size, which indicates the number of living children raised by a parent or parents in the same household.

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Population Demands

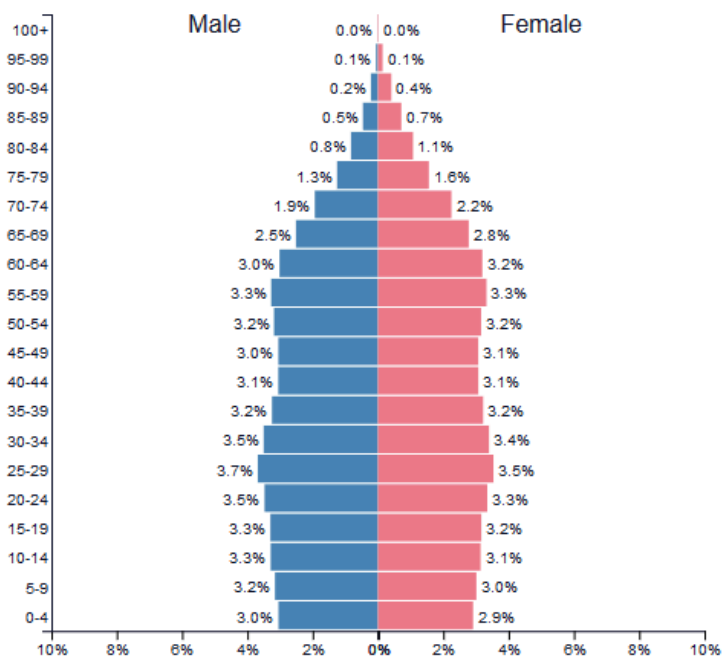
A country's demographic statistics can be illustrated graphically by a population pyramid. A **population pyramid** is two bar graphs that depict male and female age cohorts in

absolute size or as a percentage of the total population. Male cohorts are typically shown on the left side of the pyramid, and females on the right.

United States of America ▼

2019

Population: 329,064,916



“Population Pyramid of the United States of America 2019” from PopulationPyramid.net is under CC BY 3.0 IGO license.

The shape of a country’s population pyramid tells a story about the history of its population growth. For example, a

high-growth-rate country has a pyramid that is narrow at the top and wide at the bottom, showing that every year more children have been born than the year before. As family size decreases and women in society have fewer children, the shape of the pyramid changes. A population pyramid for a post-industrialized country with negative growth would be narrower at the bottom than in the middle, indicating fewer children than middle-aged people. Four basic shapes indicate the general trends in population growth:

- Rapidly expanding (example as of 2023 – Africa)
- Expanding (example as of 2023 – World)
- Stationary (example as of 2023 – South America)
- Contracting (examples as of 2023 – Europe, China, and Japan)

These shapes also illustrate the percentage of a population under the age of fifteen or over the age of sixty-five, which are standard indicators of population growth. Many post-industrial countries have a negative population growth rate. Their **population pyramids** are narrow at the bottom, indicating an urbanized population with small family sizes.



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1.6 ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Globalization and Development Globalization

Geographers and professionals in other disciplines understand that the world is not static. Cultural forces continue to act on human activities as globalization creates new alliances and global networks. The goal is to understand globalization and to make sense of what is happening. The better we understand the world and human dynamics, the better we will be prepared to address the changes. Geography provides a means to examine these changes spatially.

Globalization is a process with a long history. People have been exploring, migrating, and trading with each other throughout human history. These activities have created interactive networks connecting the different parts of the planet and producing dependent economic relationships. In modern times, globalization can be recognized by noting iconic global corporations, such as Apple, Amazon, Walmart, McDonald's, or Toyota, that trade across international borders

and integrate labor and resources from different countries to sell a product or service in the global marketplace.

These ubiquitous corporations represent corporate interests that are primarily concerned with company profits. Global corporations tend to view countries or communities as either market for their products or sources of labor or raw materials. As a result, globalization can severely impact local communities for better or for worse, depending on local circumstances. The main force that encourages globalization is economic activity based on technological advancements. As a consequence, cultural and societal changes often are no less significant.



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Political geography examines geography's influence on political systems and globalization, which are related to issues concerning the development of borders and the distribution of government types. One of the most significant events in political geography was colonialism, which is connected to capitalism's development. Colonialism significantly expanded European powers worldwide to control human and natural resources, expand a country's world power, and promote Christianity.

The British parliamentary system of government was exported to various areas of the British Empire. Now the parliamentary system is used worldwide in former British colonies and the British Commonwealth. Additionally, colonialism helped spread the English language throughout the world, for example, to India and the United States.

European colonialism was an early wave of globalization that changed the planet and shaped most of the world's current political borders. The Industrial Revolution fueled this initial wave of global conquest. Colonialism transferred technology, food products, and ideas around the globe in merchant ships centered on the European power bases of the

colonial empires of Europe—mainly Britain, Spain, France, Portugal, and the Netherlands. When the United States became independent of these European colonial powers, it expanded its power and influence worldwide. Thus the first significant wave of globalization was a result of European colonialism.



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The space race and the information age of the latter portion of the twentieth century initiated a second significant wave of globalization. The space race was a competition between the United States and the Soviet Union to develop space-related technologies, including satellites, and land on the moon. The end of the Cold War, with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, coincided with advancements in computer technology that fueled the second significant wave of modern globalization. Technology and corporate activity have stimulated a wave of globalization that impacts countries' economies worldwide. In European colonialism, the land and people were physically conquered by the mother country and

became colonies ruled by the European colonizer's government. Great Britain was the most avid colonizer and amassed great fortunes through its colonial possessions.

One difference between European colonialism and globalization today is that globally powerful multinational corporations wish to refrain from owning the country or running the government directly. Corporations are not concerned with what government type is in power or who is running the country for as long as they can operate and profit. Like European colonialism, this neocolonialism (also called new colonialism or corporate colonialism) continues to exploit natural resources, labor, and markets for economic profits. Its critics claim corporate colonialism is a legal method of pillaging and plundering. Its supporters claim it is the most efficient use of labor and resources to supply the world with the lowest-priced products.

Examples of corporate colonialism can be seen in the trade relationships between the United States and places such as Mexico and China. United States corporations moved their manufacturing plants to Mexico to earn more profits by exploiting cheap labor. The corporations do not take over Mexico politically; they exploit it economically. Likewise, the many U.S. corporations that have started manufacturing their products in China do not attempt to overthrow the Communist Chinese government; they want to exploit the cheap Chinese labor pool and open up markets to sell

products to Chinese consumers. The desire for profits drives corporate colonialism.

Climate Zones and Biomes

A climate zone results from the climate conditions of an area: temperature, humidity, amount and type of precipitation, and seasonality. The significant factors that influence climate determine the different climate zones worldwide. In general, the same type of climate zone will be found at similar latitudes and in similar positions on nearly all continents, both in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres. The one exception to this pattern is the continental climates, which are not found at higher latitudes in the Southern Hemisphere. This is because the Southern Hemisphere landmasses are not broad enough to produce a continental climate.

The most common system used to classify climatic zones is the Köppen classification system. This system is based on the temperature, amount of precipitation, and the time of the year when precipitation occurs. Since climate determines the type of vegetation that grows in an area, vegetation is often used as an indicator of climate type.

A climate type and its plants and animals make up a biome. The organisms of the biome share specific characteristics around the world because their environment has similar advantages and challenges. Furthermore, the organisms have

adapted to that environment similarly over time. For example, distinct cactus species live on different continents but have adapted similarly to the harsh desert.

Köppen Classification System

The Köppen classification system was developed by the German climatologist Wladimir Köppen in 1918. The classification system focuses on a location's average monthly and annual temperature and precipitation totals. The Köppen classification system recognizes four major climate groups based on temperature values (identified by the capital letters A, C, D, and E) and the fifth based on moisture (identified by the capital letter B) to create global climate patterns. The major climate groups can then be subdivided into more specific categories based on a combination of temperature and moisture patterns for any region worldwide. Following several modifications by geographers and climatologists over time, a newer system called the modified Köppen classification system is used today. The modified version still has the five major climate categories broken into fourteen subcategories. The modified version also has a new category for “highland,” which is represented with the capital letter H and focuses on mountainous regions.

The modified Köppen classification system is a straightforward and quick way to identify global and regional climates. The first letter (always a capital letter) represents the

primary climate type. The second lowercase letter identifies the precipitation patterns for a location. Finally, the third letter, again in lowercase, is used to identify the precipitation patterns for that location.

Climatologists create climographs to identify and understand a location's precise climate visually. Each climograph visualized average temperature and precipitation patterns for a location over a year. Temperature is a continuous line, while precipitation is a monthly bar.

There are a variety of resources available from NOAA to analyze climate data. (Visualizing Climate Data | NOAA Climate.Gov, n.d.)

- Data Snapshots
- NOAA View Data Exploration Tool
- The Climate Explore
- Panopoly
- NOAA Weather and Climate Toolkit

Climate and Human Habitation

The earth's ability to receive and absorb sunlight is a primary factor in the earth's environment and has a significant impact on human populations. For example, there are no large cities or human communities in Antarctica because it is so cold;

most of the sunlight filtering down to Antarctica is reflected off the earth at that latitude because of the tilt of its axis and the resulting angle of incoming solar radiation. Answering the fundamental questions of where most humans live on earth and why they live there depends on understanding climate. Moderate type C climates usually provide the most significant opportunities for human habitation.

Since the region between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn receives the most direct sunlight throughout the year, it is favorable to plant, and animal life provided adequate moisture or precipitation. As a result, humans have lived in the tropics for a long time, even when the ice sheets covered midlatitude parts. The tropics' problem is that the soils are usually of poor quality, and the nutrients have been leached out. Today, when we look at the earth and the distribution of the human population, two main factors attract human habitation: moderate climates and access to water.

More than 70 percent of the earth's surface is covered with water. The only problem is that less than 3 percent of the water is fresh, and most of that freshwater is stored in ice caps at the North or South Pole. This leaves less than 1 percent of the world's freshwater for human use, usually in lakes, rivers, streams, groundwater, and underground aquifers. Climate plays a vital role in where humans live because precipitation is necessary to grow crops, raise livestock, and supply fresh water to urban communities.

Several geographers have developed categories to identify climate types. Climate can be defined as a long-term average weather pattern evident in a particular region of the world. Weather is a term usually used to define short-term or even daily conditions. The two main elements in climate conditions are temperature and precipitation. For this overview of world geography, the various climate types have been broken down into six basic types—A, B, C, D, E, and H—after the Köppen-Geiger classification system. Type H climates are a subset of the type E climate category.

- Type A: Tropical or equatorial climates
- Type B: Dry or arid climates
- Type C: Moderate or temperate climates
- Type D: Cold or continental climates
- Type E: Polar or extreme climates
- Type H: (Unclassified) highland climates'

Tropical Climates (Type A)

The humid tropical type A climate, usually found in the tropics, has warm temperatures year-round with high precipitation, typically rain. Type A climates have various subgroups that indicate how varied rainfall is distributed throughout the year. Some type A climates produce a dry and wet season (monsoon), while others receive consistent rainfall throughout the year.



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Dry Climates (Type B)

The earth's desert regions exemplify the dry type B climate. Temperatures can be extreme, with little precipitation. Type B climate regions experience low rainfall and high temperatures during the day and cooler temperatures at night or during the winter season. The terrain in type B climates can range from sand deserts to prairie grasslands or steppes. Type B climates have fewer trees than most other climate areas.

There is a direct relationship between highlands and type B climates in various places in the world. This climate condition, known as the rain shadow effect, or the precipitation shadow effect, occurs when one side of a mountain range receives abundant rainfall. At the same time, the region on the other side of the mountain range is a desert or has more arid climate conditions. This phenomenon is evident wherever there is terrain with enough elevation to restrict the movement of precipitation-bearing clouds.

Rain shadows are created when prevailing winds carrying moisture rise quickly in elevation up a mountainside, where the air cools and condenses to precipitate its moisture in the form of rain or snow. When the air mass hits the top of the mountain, its moisture is much reduced. The dry air rushes down the other side of the mountain range, where it increases in temperature. The warm, dry air from the mountains continues to pull moisture out of the land, resulting in desert or arid climate conditions.

Temperate Climates (Type C)

Often described as moderate in temperature and precipitation, type C climates are the most favorable to human habitation because they host the most significant population densities on the planet. Type C climates are found mainly in the midlatitudes bordering the tropics.

Seasonal changes are pronounced, with distinct winters and summers. Winters are cool to cold, and summers are usually warm. Precipitation varies from low to high, depending on location. C climates dominate the southeast and the West Coast of the United States.

Type C climates are not the most widespread on the planet but have attracted the most abundant human populations. One reason for the attraction has been the abundance of forests, farmland, and freshwater found in type C regions. As a result, the main population centers of the planet are in type C

climates. With over seven billion people on the planet growing, humans have populated most regions with type C climates and are now filling up the other areas with A, B, or D climate types.

Continental Climates (Type D)

Type D climate regions are often found in the interiors of continents away from the moderating influence of large bodies of water. They are often farther north than type C regions, resulting in colder winters. Seasonal variations exist, with cool to hot summers and cold winters. Precipitation is usually in the form of rain in summer and snow in winter. Regions with type D climates can be found in the Great Lakes region of the United States, Canada, and a large portion of Russia.

Polar Climates (Type E)

Type E is an extreme climate type found in the polar regions near or to the north of the Arctic Circle and near or to the south of the Antarctic Circle. Regions with type E climates are cold, with permanent ice or permafrost year-round. Vegetation is minimal, and there are no trees. Temperatures may warm slightly during the summer but rarely rise above 50 degrees.

Highland Climates (Type H)

Type H highland climates are usually listed as a subcategory of type E climates. Mountain ranges can create various climate types because of the elevation change from the range's base to the summit. Different climate types can be found on the same mountain at different elevations. Type H climates designate highlands or mountain terrain. Variations in climate exist on most mountain ranges. Climates at the base of mountains will vary depending on whether the mountains are found in the tropics or the higher latitudes. For example, high mountains near the equator may have a type A climate at their base and a type E climate at their summit, with various type C and type D climates between them. Type H climates are found where elevation differences are profound enough to provide different climate zones. Higher elevation relief can reach above the tree line and have permanent snow cover at the summit. The term relief is used in geography to indicate land surface elevations. Elevation zones with permanent ice or snow can resemble a type E polar climate.

Deforestation

The planet's growing population has increased demands on natural resources, including forest products. Humans have been using trees for firewood, building homes, and making

tools for millennia. As trees are a renewable resource, deforestation occurs when they are removed faster than they can be replenished. Most people in rural areas in developing countries rely on firewood to cook their food. Many of these areas are experiencing a fast decline in the number of trees available. People living in mainly type B climates may have access to few trees to start with; therefore, when trees are cut down for firewood or building materials, deforestation occurs. In tropical areas, it is common for hardwood trees to be cut down for lumber to gain income or to clear the land for other agricultural purposes, such as cattle ranching. Countries that lack opportunities and advantages look to exploit their natural resources—in this case, trees—for either subsistence agriculture or economic gain. Deforestation has increased globally with a rapid rise in the worldwide population.

Countries that are better off economically no longer have to cut down their trees but can afford to substitute other resources or import lumber from other places. Developing regions of the world in Latin America, Africa, and Asia are experiencing severe problems with deforestation.

Tropical rainforests only make up about 5 percent of the earth's surface but contain up to 50 percent of the earth's biodiversity. Unfortunately, these forests are cut down for a variety of reasons. Norman Meyers, a British environmentalist, estimated that the push for cattle production causes about 5 percent of deforestation in tropical regions. The timber industry cuts down nineteen percent of these forests, 22

percent are cut down for the expansion of plantation agriculture, and 54 percent are removed due to slash-and-burn farming. Most tropical rainforests are in the Amazon basin of South America, central Africa, and Southeast Asia. All these areas are looking for advantages and opportunities to boost their economies; unfortunately, they often target their tropical rainforests as revenue sources.



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Deforestation causes more than the loss of trees for fuel, building materials, paper products, or manufacturing. Another related issue in the deforestation equation is soil erosion. Soils are eroded without the trees to hold the soil during heavy rains, leaving the ground unproductive. In tropical areas, soils are often degraded and lack nutrients. Most of the nutrients in tropical areas rest in decaying material at the base of the trees that supply energy back into the ecosystem. Once the trees are removed, this energy supply has little replenishment. Soil erosion in tropical areas makes it hard for forests to grow back once removed. Landslides can be a more

severe component of the soil erosion problem. After heavy rainfall, entire hillsides saturated with water can slide downward, causing severe structural damage to buildings, homes, and agricultural plots. Tree roots help hold hillsides together and therefore help prevent landslides.

Forests play an essential role in the water cycle. Trees pull up moisture with their roots from the soil and transpire it through their leaves back into the atmosphere. Moisture in the atmosphere collects into clouds, condenses, and falls back to earth. Not only do trees store water, but the organic matter at the base of the trees also stores water and makes it available to the broader ecosystem, which may slow down water runoff. In addition, forest canopies disperse water during rainfall and create another layer of moisture in their leaves and branches, either used by other organisms or evaporated back into the atmosphere. Deforestation eliminates the role that forests play in the water cycle.

Forest ecosystems provide for a diverse community of organisms. Tropical rainforests are one of the most vibrant ecosystems on the planet. Their abundant biodiversity can provide insight into untapped solutions for the future. Plants and organisms in these habitats may be critical to medical or biological breakthroughs. However, wildlife and vegetation will be lost as deforestation eliminates their habitat and accelerates the extinction of endangered species.



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Trees and plants remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in the plant structure through photosynthesis. Carbon dioxide is a significant greenhouse gas part of the climate change process. Carbon dioxide and other similar gases reduce the long-wave radiation (heat) that escapes from the earth's atmosphere, resulting in increased temperatures on the planet. As more carbon dioxide is emitted into the atmosphere, climate change occurs. Removing trees through deforestation results in less carbon dioxide being removed from the atmosphere, which contributes to climate change. Slash-and-burn farming methods that burn forests release the carbon in the plant life directly into the atmosphere, increasing the climate change effect.



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Climate Change

Climate change has been a constant activity in the planet's evolution. However, the increase in temperature in our environment is the activity that has gained the most attention in recent years. As a result, questions have been raised about the rate and extent of climate change worldwide. Understanding the dynamics of the temperature increase can assist in understanding how it is related to human activity.

The atmosphere is the gaseous layer that surrounds the earth and marks the transition between its surface and space. The atmosphere consists of a mixture of gases composed of nitrogen (77 percent), oxygen (21 percent), and minor elements (1 percent), including argon, helium, carbon dioxide, and water vapor. The small amount of carbon dioxide is a critical component in the control of the earth's temperature. The atmosphere extends over three hundred miles above the earth's surface, and the lower level makes up the earth's climatic system. This lowest level is called the troposphere and

is responsible for the conditions that allow life to exist on the planet's surface.

Since the 1960s, scientists have been concerned about the concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and chlorofluorocarbons in the atmosphere. These so-called greenhouse gases can trap heat energy emitted from the earth's surface and may increase global temperatures and cause climate change. Since the Industrial Revolution, human activity—burning fossil fuels and large-scale deforestation—has increased the amount of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide and similar gases act like the glass panels of a greenhouse that allow short-wave radiation from the sun to enter but do not allow the long-wave radiation of heat to escape into space.

An increase in carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases in the atmosphere will generally cause an increase in the temperature of the planet's climate, which may cause changes in weather conditions in various places on earth. Temperature changes may affect precipitation patterns and alter weather patterns, which may affect agricultural outputs and influence energy needs which can create increasing economic instability. Climate changes also impact environmental conditions for organisms adapted to specific habitat ranges. When climates change, an organism's habitable zone may also change, impacting entire ecosystems.

Deforestation and the burning of fossil fuels can contribute to climate change. Fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas

are created when dead plant and animal life are under pressure, decay for long periods, and retain their carbon component. Burning fossil fuels releases carbon back into the atmosphere. The increasing need for energy and lumber by human activity will continue to contribute to climate change unless alternatives can be found. In addition, the increase in temperatures may melt ice caps, raise sea levels, and impact human activity worldwide. More information about climate change is included in chapter 13 on Antarctica.

1.8 SUMMARY

Geography is the spatial study of the earth's surface. The dynamic discipline of geography bridges the social sciences with the physical sciences. The creation of maps can illustrate geography's spatial nature as an essential means of communicating information. Human geography and physical geography are the two main fields of the discipline. GPS, GIS, and remote sensing are tools geographers use to spatially study a location or the physical or cultural landscape.

Geographers divide the earth into a geometric grid to provide location references to places on its surface. Human activity is orientated around the grid system to provide time zones, navigation, and the organization of communication systems. Climate and seasonal changes can be tracked using this grid system of longitude and latitude.

Regions are the basic units of geographic study. World geography divides the world into regions called realms that are used as comparison studies regarding human and physical landscapes and activities. For example, climate regions or zones help understand the earth's environmental conditions. Historically, human activity has been strongly affected by variations in climates. Type C climates have generally attracted large human populations.

The relationship between the environment and human activity is an essential component of geography. The movement of tectonic plates sometimes causes earthquakes and volcanic activity, which affects human activity. The rain shadow effect can also impact where and how humans live. Human activity contributes to environmental problems such as deforestation, which impacts the environment through the loss of habitats, soil erosion, and possibly climate change.

The human population continues to increase. The earth's carrying capacity for humans is debatable, but the impact humans have on the planet is undeniably extensive. Some factors and conditions encourage high population growth, while others discourage population growth. Migration, rural-to-urban shift, and urbanization are related to changes in population. As the population increases, the number of languages continues to decrease—an example of the impact of globalization.

European colonialism created a significant wave of globalization that extended until World War II. After the Cold War ended, the second wave of globalization was fueled by the information age and the introduction of new communication and transportation technologies. Concepts such as labor and resources, opportunity and advantage, or haves and have-nots can help explain the dynamics of globalization.

The core-periphery spatial relationship helps explain how human economic activity is organized around either an urban core or a rural periphery. The methods countries use to gain

national income are a means to understand how economic activity is categorized and explained. Finally, the index of economic development is a model relating to the stages a country may transition through to reach a post-industrial development level. All these concepts, models and theories are tools used to understand the human activities that are elements of globalization.

1.9 MAPPING THE MOVING EARTH

Examine seismic and volcanic activity patterns worldwide relative to tectonic plate boundaries, physical features on the earth's surface, and cities at risk.

Learning Outcomes

- Locate zones of significant seismic or volcanic activity.
- Describe the relationship between high seismic or volcanic activity zones and tectonic plate boundaries.



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PART II

EAST ASIA

2.1 IDENTIFY THE BOUNDARIES



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East Asia is a vast expanse of territory with China as its largest country. The countries of Mongolia, North and South Korea,

and Japan are China's neighbors. The island of Taiwan, off the eastern coast of China, has an independent government that has been separated from mainland China since shortly after World War II. On the southern coast of China is Hong Kong, a former British possession with one of the best ports in Asia. Under an agreement of autonomy, Hong Kong and its port were turned over to the Chinese government in 1997. Next door, to the west of Hong Kong, is the former Portuguese colony of Macau, which has also been returned to Chinese control. In western China is the autonomous region of Tibet, referred to by its Chinese name, Xizang. Tibet has been controlled by Communist China since 1949, shortly after the People's Republic of China (PRC) was declared a country. Lobbying attempts by the Dalai Lama and others for Tibetan independence have not been successful. The region of Tibet has recently become more integrated with the country of China because of the immigration of a large number of Chinese people to the Tibetan region.

Japan has emerged as the economic dragon of East Asia. Japanese people have a high standard of living, and the country has been an industrial and financial engine for the Pacific Rim. The coastal lands bordering the Pacific Ocean are also up and coming economic tigers. Quickly emerging economic centers in Asia that now include South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea have also experienced strong economic growth and are strong competitors in the global economy.

Balancing out the advances of the economic tigers and Japan is the extensive labor base of the Chinese people, which has catapulted the Chinese economy to its position as a significant player in the global economy. Left behind in the region is North Korea, which has isolated itself behind an authoritarian dictatorship since World War II. Several countries that were former enemies in World War II are now trading partners (e.g., China and Japan), as economic trade bridges cultural gaps with common goods and services. However, cultural and political differences between these countries remain.

East Asia is home to one-fifth of the human population. The realm's location on the Pacific Rim provides access for interaction with the global economy. The location of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, just off the coast of mainland China, creates an industrial environment that has awakened the human entrepreneurial spirit of the realm. Manufacturing has fueled the high-tech engines of the Pacific Rim economies, which have recently taken advantage of the massive labor pool of the Chinese heartland. Across the Pacific from East Asia are the superpower of the United States and its North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) partners, countries that are both competing against and trading with the East Asian Community (EAC). The Russian realm to the north of East Asia, especially its Pacific port of Vladivostok, continues to engage the East Asian nations actively.

2.2 PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE REGION

East Asia is surrounded by a series of mountain ranges in the west, Mongolia, and Russia in the north, and Southeast Asia to the south. The Himalayas border Tibet and Nepal; the **Karakoram Ranges, Pamirs, and the Tian Shan Mountains** shadow Central Asia; and the Altay Mountains are next to Russia. The **Himalayan Mountains** are among the world's highest mountain ranges, and Mt. Everest is the planet's tallest peak. These high ranges create a rain shadow effect, generating the dry arid conditions of type B climates that dominate western China. The desert conditions of western China give rise to a sizeable uninhabitable region in its center. Melting snow from the high elevation feeds many of the streams that transition into the major rivers that flow toward the east.

Created by tectonic plate action, the many mountain ranges are also home to earthquakes and tremors that are devastating to human livelihood. The Indian tectonic plate is still pushing northward into the Eurasian plate, forcing the Himalayan ranges upward. With an average elevation of

fifteen thousand feet, the Tibetan Plateau is the largest plateau region of the world. It has high elevations and type H climates. The plateau is sparsely populated, and the only places with human habitation are the river valleys. Lhasa is the largest city of the sparsely populated region. Sometimes called “the Roof of the World,” the Tibetan Plateau is a land of superlatives. The small amount of precipitation that occurs often comes in the form of hailstorms mixed with wind. Its landscape is generally rocky and barren.

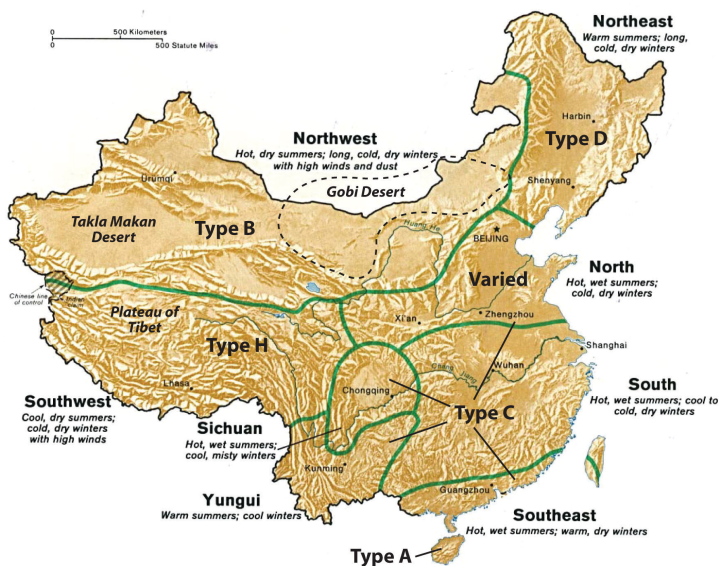


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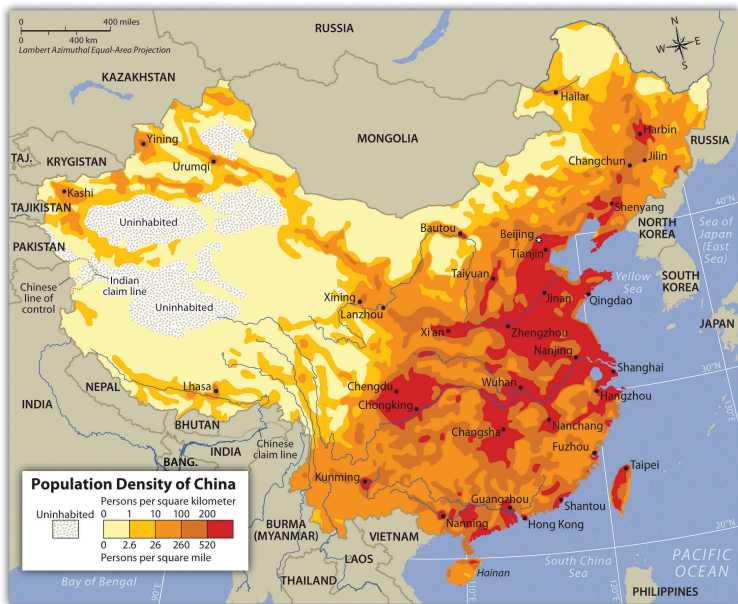
The vast arid regions of western China extend into the **Gobi Desert** between Mongolia and China. Colder type D climates dominate the Mongolian steppe and northern China. The eastern coast of the Asian continent is home to islands and peninsulas, which include Taiwan and the countries of Japan and North and South Korea. North Korea’s type D climates are similar to the northern tier of the United States, comparable to North Dakota. Taiwan is farther south, producing a warmer tropical type A climate. The

mountainous islands of Japan have been formed because of tectonic plates and are prone to earthquakes. Since water moderates temperature, the coastal areas of East Asia have more moderate temperatures than the interior ones. A type C climate is dominant in Japan, but the north has a colder type D climate. The densely populated fertile river valleys of central and southeastern China are matched by contrasting economic conditions. Fertile alluvial soils and moderate temperatures create excellent farmland that provides enormous food production to fuel an ever-growing population.



Most of China's population lives in its eastern region, called **China Proper**, with type C climates, freshwater, and good soils. China Proper has dense population clusters that correspond to the areas of type C climate that extend south

from Shanghai to Hong Kong. Around the world, most humans have gravitated toward type C climates. These climates have produced fertile agricultural lands that provide an abundance of food for the enormous Chinese population. To the south, the temperatures are warmer, with hot and humid summers and dry, warm winters. The climates of China Proper are conducive for human habitation, which has transformed the region into a highly populated human community. The **North China Plain** at the mouth of the **Yellow River** (Huang He River) has productive farmland and is the most densely populated region in China.



Northwest of Beijing is **Inner Mongolia** and the Gobi Desert, a desert that extends into the independent country of Mongolia. Arid type B climates dominate the region to the

southern half of Mongolia. The northern half of Mongolia is colder with continental type D climates. In the higher elevations of the highlands in western Mongolia, there is a section of type H highland climates. Its climate and location identify Mongolia as a landlocked country in the northern latitudes with a low level of precipitation. The areas of type D climate that extend north from Beijing through Northeast China at times receive more precipitation than northern Mongolia. Northeast China features China's vast forests and excellent agricultural land. Many of China's abundant natural mineral resources are found in this area. Balancing mineral extraction with the preservation of agricultural land and timber resources is a perennial issue.

Lying north of the Great Wall and encompassing the autonomous region of Inner Mongolia is the vast Mongolian steppe, which includes broad flat grasslands that extend north into the highlands. North China includes the Yellow River basin as well as the municipalities of Beijing and Tianjin. Areas around parts of the Yellow River are superb agricultural lands, including vast areas of loess that have been terraced for cultivation. Loess is extremely fine silt or windblown soil that is yellow in this region. Deciduous forests continue to exist in this region, despite aggressive clearcutting for agricultural purposes. The Great Wall of China rests atop hills in this region.

Most of western China is arid, with a type B climate. Western China has large regions like the **Takla Makan**

Desert that are uninhabited and inhospitable because of hot summers and long cold winters exacerbated by the cold winds sweeping down from the north. In a local Uyghur language, the name Takla Makan means, “*You will go in, but you will not go out.*” To the far west are the high mountains bordering Central Asia that restrict travel and trade with the rest of the continent. Northwestern China is a mountainous region featuring glaciers, deserts, and basins.

The central portion of China Proper is subtropical. This vast region includes the southern portion of the **Yangtze River** (Chang Jiang River) and the cities of **Shanghai** and **Chongqing**. Alluvial processes give this area prime agricultural land. Its climate is warm and humid in the summers with mild winters; monsoons create distinct summer rainy seasons. Tropical China lies in the extreme south and includes **Hainan Island** and the small islands that neighbor it. Annual temperatures are higher here than in the subtropical region, and rainfall amounts brought by the summer monsoons are at times very substantial. Low mountains and hills characterize this area.

River Basins of China

Two major river systems provide fresh water to the vast agricultural regions of the central part of China Proper. The Yellow River (Huang He River) is named after the light-

colored silt that washes into the river. It flows from the Tibetan highlands through the North China Plain into the Yellow Sea. Dams, canals, and irrigation projects along the river provide water for extensive agricultural operations. While wheat, sorghum, corn, and soybeans are common with vegetables, fruit, and tobacco grown in smaller plots. The North China Plain must grow enough food to feed its one thousand people per square mile average density. This plain does not usually produce a food surplus because of the high demand from the large population of the region. Beijing borders the North China Plain. Its nearest port, **Tianjin**, continues to expand and grow, creating an economic center of industrial activity that relies on the peripheral regions for food and raw materials. Cotton is an example of a key industrial crop grown here.

The Yangtze River (Chang Jiang River) flows out of the Tibetan Plateau through the Sichuan Province, through the Three Gorges region and its lower basin into the East China Sea. Agricultural production along the river includes extensive rice and wheat farming. Large cities are often located along this river, including Wuhan and **Chongqing**. **Nanjing** and Shanghai are situated near the delta on the coast. Shanghai is the largest city in China and is a growing metropolis. The **Three Gorges Dam** of the Yangtze River is the world's largest dam. It produces a large percentage of electricity for central China. Oceangoing ships can travel up the Yangtze to **Wuhan** and, utilizing locks in the Three

Gorges Dam, these cargo vessels can travel all the way upriver to Chongqing. The Yangtze River is a valuable and vital transportation corridor for transporting goods between periphery and core and between the different urban centers of activity. Sichuan is among the top five provinces in China in terms of population and is dependent on the Yangtze River system to provide for its needs and connect it with the rest of China.

Northeast China was formerly known as Manchuria, named after the Manchu ethnic group, which had dominated the region in Chinese history. Two river basins create a favorable industrial climate for economic activity. The lower **Liao River Basin** and the **Songhua River Basin** cut through Northeast China, along the cities of **Harbin** and **Shenyang** to be located there. This region is known as the **Northeast China Plain**. It has extensive farming activities located next to an industrial landscape of smokestacks, factories, and warehouses. Considerable mineral wealth and iron ore deposits in the region have augmented the industrial activities and have created severe environmental concerns because of excessive air and water pollution. In its zenith in the 1970s, this was China's leading steel production area, but the region is being reduced to a rustbelt since many of China's manufacturing centers are now being developed in the southern regions of China Proper.



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The southernmost region of China Proper is home to the **Pearl River Basin**, an important agricultural and commercial district. Though smaller in size than the Yangtze River Basin, major global urban centers are located on its estuary, where the mouth of the river flows into the South China Sea. The system includes the Xi River, Pearl River, and their tributaries. As the third-longest river system in China, these rivers process an enormous amount of water and have the second-highest volume of water flow after the Yangtze. **Guangzhou**, Macau, and Hong Kong are the most significant cities in the rapidly expanding industrial center of **Shenzhen**. As mentioned earlier, Macau was a former Portuguese colony, and Hong Kong was a former British colony. These urban areas are now hubs for international trade and global commerce. Guangzhou is one of China's largest cities, along with Shanghai, Beijing, Wuhan, and Tianjin. Cantonese heritage and traditions form a foundation for the cultural background of the people who live here.

China Doesn't Want Your Trash



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Watch the video “China Doesn’t Want Your Trash” from PolyMatter and consider the following:

- *Why was China buying the majority of the world’s trash?*
- *Describe why China decided to stop accepting the world’s trash in 2017.*
- *Three Gorges Dam (The New China Dam)*

The Three Gorges Dam on the Chang Jiang River (also called the Yangtze River) is known in China as the New China Dam. Its hydroelectric production system is the largest on Earth. The river system is the world’s third longest, after the Nile

and the Amazon. Ideas for this project go back to the days just after the last dynasty fell. Plans and development began in the decades before 1994 when the construction of the dam began. The primary purposes of the dam are to control the massive flooding along the Chang Jiang, produce hydroelectric power, and increase shipping capacity along the river.

- Dam length: 7,661 feet
- Dam height: 610 feet
- Dam width (at base): 377 feet
- Physical construction began December 14, 1994
- Construction cost: estimated thirty-nine billion US dollars
- Estimated surface area of the reservoir: 403 square miles
- Estimated length of the reservoir: 375 miles
- Capacity of thirty-two generators totaling 22,500 MW (equivalent to about twenty nuclear power plants the size of the Watts Bar 1, the newest US nuclear reactor)



Before the construction of the dam, flooding along the Chang Jiang cost thousands of lives and billions of dollars in damage. In 1954, the river flooded, causing the deaths of more than thirty-three thousand people, and displacing an additional eighteen million people. The large city of Wuhan was flooded for three months. In 1998, a similar flood caused billions of dollars in damage, flooded thousands of acres of farmland, resulted in more than 1,526 deaths, and displaced more than 2.3 million people. The dam was rigorously tested in 2009 when a massive flood worked its way through the waterway. The dam was able to withstand the pressure by containing the excess water and controlling the flow downstream. The dam saved many lives and prevented billions of dollars in potential damage. The savings in human lives and in preventing economic damage are projected to outweigh the dam's ecological destruction and financial cost within a few decades.

The dam produces most of the electricity for the lower

Chang Jiang Basin, including Shanghai, the largest city in China. Five years of the dam producing electricity has already paid for about one-third of its construction costs, which is equivalent to burning approximately 150 million tons of coal (depending on coal quality). This reduces the emission of millions of tons of carbon dioxide, sulfur, and nitrogen oxides into the atmosphere, which reduces air pollution and does not contribute to climate change. Heavy freight traffic on the Yangtze was the norm even before the dam was built; in fact, it has the highest rates of transport of any river. The building of the dam has augmented the amount of freight traffic.

All the positive attributes of the Three Gorges Dam have contributed to the economic development of China. This is a testimony to the engineering and technological capacity of the nation. However, this project has also created its problems and negative impacts on culture and the environment. By 2008, the number of people forced to relocate from the flooding of the reservoir had reached 1.24 million. Historic villages and hundreds of archaeological sites were flooded. Thousands of farmers had to be relocated, without compensation, to places with less productive soils. Sadly, much of the scenic beauty of the river basin is now underwater.

Animal species like the critically endangered Siberian Cranes, who had wintered in the former wetlands of the river, had to find habitat elsewhere. The endangered Yangtze River Dolphin has been doomed to extinction because of the dam

and the amplified river activity. The dam restricts the flushing of water pollution and creates a massive potential for landslides along its banks, exacerbating the potential for the silting in of the reservoir and the clogging of the dam's turbines. The dam also sits on a fault zone, and there is a concern that the water's massive weight in the reservoir could trigger earthquakes that may destroy the dam, with catastrophic consequences. Large development projects tend to have an enormous impact on the people and the environment that inhabit their shadow. The building of the Three Gorges Dam has created controversy, with strong arguments on both sides of the issues. Other large dams are being proposed to complicate the situation further or are under construction along the same river.



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Natural Disasters

Much of what unites this region is its instability, not

necessarily in terms of geopolitics, but rather its physical landscape. East and Southeast Asia are located in the **Pacific Ring of Fire**, an area of high tectonic activity along the Pacific Ocean basin. The vast majority of the world's earthquakes, around 90 percent, occur along this geologically unstable area.

In this region, tectonic collisions have shaped the physical landforms present in the region and present numerous natural hazards. Volcanoes erupt in this region frequently, and many of the islands in this region were formed from a variety of historical volcanic eruptions. For example, the majestic Mount Fuji, Japan's highest mountain peak, is an active volcano that last erupted in the early 18th century. The 1815 eruption of Indonesia's Mount Tambora, one of its many active volcanoes, was so powerful that it cooled global temperatures and caused crop failures as far away as Egypt and France. In 1883, the volcanic island of Krakatoa, between the Indonesian islands of Java and Sumatra, erupted with such an explosion that it collapsed. Tens of thousands died, and it took several years for global weather patterns to return to normal. The sound of the eruption is considered the loudest sound in modern history and could be heard from over 4,800 kilometers (3,000 miles) away. (Finlayson, 2019)



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In 2011, the most powerful earthquake to ever hit Japan, a magnitude 9.0, resulted in over 40 meters (131 feet) high in tsunami waves in some areas. The earthquake and subsequent tsunami leftover 15,000 dead and damaged hundreds of thousands of buildings. Most notably, the tsunami-damaged Japan's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant causing a series of nuclear meltdowns and the release of radioactive material.



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While nothing can stop Earth's massive tectonic plates from moving, warning systems, land use planning, and public education could help prevent casualties. After the 2004 Indonesian earthquake and tsunami, the international

community created an Indian Ocean tsunami warning system. Although some of the hardest-hit areas would have had only minutes to find higher ground, the warning system could have had a significant impact in alerting areas ahead of the wave. In Japan, earthquake drills are standard, and strict building codes ensure that buildings can withstand most seismic activity.

In addition to these geologic hazards, typhoons are also frequent in this region. Typhoons, the term for tropical cyclones in the northwestern region of the Pacific Ocean, routinely make landfall in East Asia. The region has more tropical cyclone activity than anywhere else on Earth. Most storms form in the summer between June and November, and the Philippines' islands are generally the hardest hit. Monitoring systems have been in place in the region for several decades and have helped to minimize these powerful storm systems' impacts. (Finlayson, 2019)

2.3 HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE REGION

Chinese Dynasties and Colonialism

The earliest Chinese dynasty dates to around 2200 BCE. It was located in the fertile North China Plain. Organized as a political system, Chinese dynasties created the Chinese state, which provided for a continuous transfer of power, ideas, and culture from one generation to another. From 206 to 220 CE, the **Han Dynasty** established the Chinese identity; Chinese people became known as People of Han or Han Chinese. The last dynasty, the **Qing (Manchu) Dynasty**, which ruled between 1644 and 1911, claimed control of a region including all of China, Mongolia, Southeast Asia, and Korea. Dynastic rule ended in China in 1911.



"Map of the Great Wall of China" is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International.

In general, the Chinese dynasties were largely isolationist. China has a number of physical barriers that separate it from the rest of Asia, such as the Himalayas, the rugged western highlands, and the Gobi Desert. The only region where it was vulnerable to invasion was its northeastern region. Here, the ruling families of China built a series of walls, known today as simply the Great Wall of China. However, the term the **Great Wall of China** is a misnomer. In fact, there is a series of overlapping walled fortifications that began being constructed by early dynasties in the 5th century BCE and continued through to the 17th century CE. Walls are a defensive military

structure and are thus an expression of a civilization that wished to be left alone. Emperors generally disregarded China's extensive coastline, and where port cities did emerge, they were primarily used for local trade. (Finlayson, 2019)



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Europeans colonized the Americas, Africa, and South Asia, and it was only a matter of time before technology, larger ships, and the European invasion reached East Asia. European colonialism arrived in China during the Qing Dynasty. China had been an industrialized state for centuries; long before the empires of Rome and Greece were at their peak, China's industrial cities flourished with the concepts of clean drinking water, transportation, and technology. Paper, gunpowder, and printing were used in China centuries before they arrived in Europe. The **Silk Road**, which crossed the often-dangerous elevations of the high mountain passes, was the main link between China and Europe.



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European colonial powers met fierce resistance in China. They were kept at bay for years. Meanwhile, the Industrial Revolution in Europe, which cranked out mass-produced products at a low price, provided an advantage over Chinese production. British colonizers exported opium, an addictive narcotic, from their colonies in South Asia to China to help break down Chinese culture. By importing tons of opium into China, the British were able to instigate social problems. The first **Opium Wars** of 1839–1842 ended with Britain gaining the upper hand and laying claim to most of central China. Other European powers also sought to gain a foothold in China. Portugal gained the port of Macau, Germany took control of the coastal region of the vibrant North China Plain, and France carved off part of southern China and Southeast Asia. Russia came from the north to lay claim to the northern sections of China. Japan, which was just across China's waterfront, took control of Korea and the island of Formosa (now called Taiwan). Claims on China increased as

colonialism moved in to take control of the Chinese mainland.

<https://youtu.be/0l4C3vZudZI>

Though European powers laid claim to parts of China, they often fought among themselves. China did not produce heavy military weapons as early as the Europeans did and, therefore, could not fend them off upon their invasion. Chinese culture, which had flourished for four thousand years, quickly eroded through outside intrusion. It was not until about 1900 when the Chinese people organized a rebellion against foreigners (known as the Boxer Rebellion) that the conflict reached recognizable dimensions. The Qing Dynasty dissolved in 1911, which signified an end to European colonialism advancements, even though European colonies remained in China.



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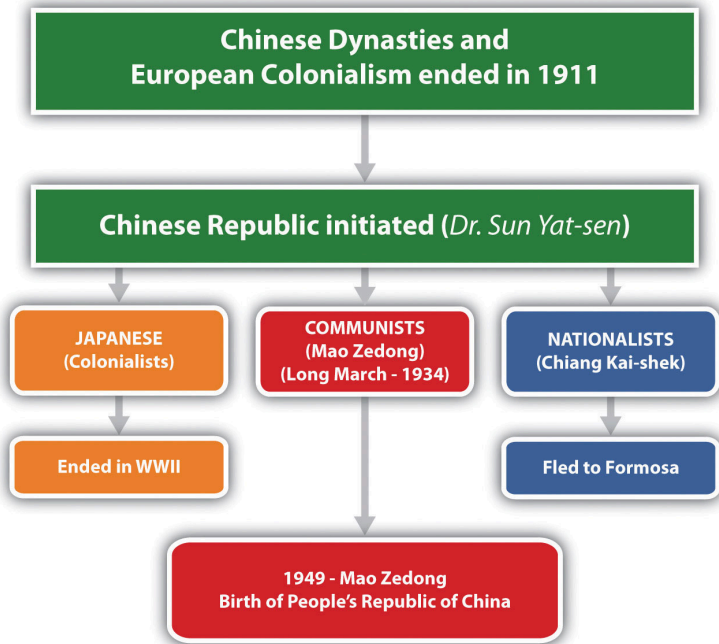
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Three-Way Split in China

European colonialism in China slowed after 1911, and World War I severely weakened European powers. The Japanese colonizers, on the other hand, continued to make advancements. Japan did not have far to travel to resupply troops and support its military. In China, a doctor by the name of Dr. Sun Yatsen promoted the independent Chinese Republic, free from dynastic rule, Japan, or European colonial influence. Political parties of Nationalists and Communists also worked to establish the republic. Dr. Sun Yatsen died in 1925. The Nationalists, under the leadership of **Chiang Kai-shek**, defeated the Communists and established a national government. Foreigners were evicted. The Communists were driven out of politics.

Nationalists, Communists, and Japan conducted a three-way war over the control of China. Japan's military took control of parts of Northeast China, known as Manchuria, and was making advancements on the eastern coast. Nationalists defeated the Communists for power and were pushing them into the mountains. The Chinese people were in support of the two parties working together to defeat the Japanese. The **Long March of 1934** was a six-thousand-mile retreat by the Communists through rural China, pursued by Nationalist forces. The people of the countryside gave aid to the efforts of the Communists. The Chinese were primarily

interested in Japan's defeat, a country that was brutally killing massive numbers of China's people in their aggressive war.



In 1945, the defeat of Japan in World War II by the United States changed many things. Japan's admission of defeat prompted the end of Japanese control of territory in China, Tai-wan, Korea, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific. By 1948, the Communists, who were becoming well organized, were defeating the Nationalists. Chiang Kai-shek gathered his people and what Chinese treasures he could and fled by boat to the island of Formosa (Taiwan), which in 1945 had just been freed from Japan. Taiwan was declared the official Republic of China (ROC). The Communists took over the mainland government. In 1949, Communist leader Mao

Zedong declared the People's Republic of China (PRC) with its capital in Peking (Beijing). Japan was devastated by US bombing and defeated in World War II; its infrastructure destroyed and its colonies lost, Japan had to begin the long process of rebuilding its country. Korea was finally liberated from the Chinese dynasties and Japanese colonialism but began to experience an internal political division. Political structures in the second half of the twentieth century in East Asia were vastly different from the political structures that had been in place when the century began.

Communism in East Asia

The second half of the 20th century was a time of significant political change for East Asia. The former colonies of Japan were able to break away from their colonial past and become independent, but as in many other parts of the world, that independence often coincided with political conflict.

For Japan, the end of World War II brought a period of **Westernization** and rapid economic growth and rapid economic growth. Westernization refers to the process of adopting Western, particularly European and American, culture, and values. Japan adopted a new constitution and embraced democratic principles. It continued to industrialize and would become a global leader in electronics and automotive production. Today, Japan has the fourth largest

GDP behind only the United States, the European Union, and China.

In other parts of East Asia, the political changes to the region following World War II tended toward **communism**, a social, political, and economic system that seeks communal ownership of the means of production. Communism is associated with **Marxism**, an analysis of social class and conflict based on the work of Karl Marx (1818-1883 CE). In a typical society, factories are owned by a wealthy few who then pay workers a lower wage to ensure that they make a profit. In a communist society, however, the goal of Marxism would be a classless society where everyone shares the ownership and thus receives equal profits.



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Marxist ideas spread to China by the early 20th century and found particular support among Chinese intellectuals. The Communist Revolution in Russia inspired Marxists in China who founded a communist political party that would eventually be led by Mao Zedong. The communist party

continued to gain traction in China and following a civil war, Mao Zedong established the communist People's Republic of China in 1949. The previous Chinese government fled to the island of Taiwan, which is officially known as the Republic of China and claims control of the entire mainland. China, however, maintains that Taiwan is part of China.



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After securing political control of China, Mao Zedong sought to transform China's culture by reorienting it around the ideology of communism. One of the first steps in this transformation was the **Great Leap Forward** from 1958 to 1961 which sought to reshape China's agrarian society into an industrial power. Unfortunately, the changes led to widespread famine and the deaths of tens of millions of Chinese as a direct result.



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Following the failure of the Great Leap Forward, Mao aimed to eliminate any remaining traditional elements of Chinese culture or capitalist thinking through the **Cultural Revolution**. Millions were imprisoned, forcibly relocated, or tortured, and historical relics and cultural sites were destroyed. After Mao's death, several leaders responsible for the abuses committed during the Cultural Revolution were arrested and China began a period of modernization and economic reform.



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In the Korean peninsula, allied forces divided the former Japanese colony along the 38th parallel. Russia would control

the northern portion, where it helped install a communist government and economic system. The United States occupied the southern portion, where it assisted a pro-Western government in its political and economic development. Tensions between the two territories led to the Korean War in the early 1950s. Technically, the two sides are still at war having never signed a peace agreement and simply agreeing to a cease-fire. Today, North Korea, officially the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), follows a Marxist model of development with state-owned enterprises and agriculture. The government has been accused of numerous human rights violations and the people of North Korea are severely restricted in terms of their economic, political, and personal freedom. In South Korea, on the other hand, officially known as the Republic of Korea, a democratic government replaced a series of military dictatorships and the country is considered one of the most developed in the region according to the Human Development Index.

The Silk Road Mapping Activity



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Step 1: Explore the ArcGIS map provided above or click on The Silk Roads: Then and Now.

Step 2: Click the lines on the map that make up the Silk Roads – Trade Routes. Next, click the large green arrow on the map and read the text.

Question: Describe where the Silk Road was located.

- Hint: Is the Silk Road one continuous route or many segments?

Step 3: With the Details button depressed, click the button (Show) Contents.

Step 4: Click the checkbox next to the layer name, Global Biomes. Next, click the layer name, Global Biomes, to see the legend.

Biomes played an important part in the spatial patterns of the Silk Roads. The biome that has the largest extent along the Silk Roads is vast deserts. The Silk Roads typically went around mountain and grassland biomes. And the stars on the map mark the locations of oases along the Silk Road.

Step 5: Click the Mountains bookmark and click the three mountain icons.

Question: Explain how the physical landscape affected the routes along the Silk Road.

- Hints: Which biome has the largest extent along the Silk Roads?
- Which biomes did the Silk Roads go around?
- What benefit would the tall mountains and rivers provide to travelers of the Silk Roads as they traversed the deserts on certain parts of the Silk Roads?

Step 6: Click the button, Measure. Choose the Distance tool and set it to Miles.

Step 7: Zoom out and click the star representing the farthest west oasis (Constantinople) on the Silk Roads. Measure along the route that the oases are on to the farthest east star (Ki'an). Click Measure, select the Distance button, and choose a unit of measurement from the drop-down list. On the map, click once to start the measurement, click again to change direction, and double-click to stop measuring. Hint:

Position the area of interest on the map so that the Measure window does not obscure it.

Question: Describe how long it would take to travel along the Silk Road.

- How far did merchants travel so far for such long periods?
- During these long caravan trips, what non-tangible items might have been exchanged or diffused (intentionally or unintentionally)?

Step 8: Recall the previous content on how the physical landscape influenced the routes along the Silk Road.

Question: Describe why there were so many routes along the Silk Roads.

- How did merchants travel so far for such long periods?
- During these long caravan trips, what non-tangible items might have also been exchanged or diffused (whether int

Step 9: Turn on the layer, Iron Silk Road. Click the Iron Silk Road on the map and read the pop-up. The “new railroad from Europe to Asia was called the Iron Silk Road because the railroad offered the transport of goods, people, and ideas across the same vast continents.

Question: Explain why the routes used by the Silk Roads are still important today.

- Why was the “new” railroad from Europe to Asia coined the Iron Silk Road?

2.4 CHINA

Emergence of Modern China

China is the world's largest Communist country. Isolated from Europeans and Central Asians by the Himalayas and other high mountain ranges, Chinese culture has endured for thousands of years. Rich in history, adventure, and intrigue, a tour through China would re-veal a people with a deep, longstanding love of the land, traditions as old as recorded history, and a spirit of commerce and hard work that sustains them to this day. China is about the same land size as the United States, although technically, it is slightly smaller than the United States in total area, depending on how land and water areas are calculated. China only has an eastern coast, whereas the United States has both an eastern and western coast. As mentioned in previous chapters, there are direct relationships between climate and population, which is observed in various regions of China.



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The form of Communism promoted by Mao Zedong was not the same as the type of Communism practiced in the Soviet Union. Various Communist experiments were forced upon the Chinese people, with disastrous results. For example, in 1958, the **Great Leap Forward** was announced. In this program, people were divided into communes, and peasant armies were to work the land while citizens were asked to donate their pots and pans to produce scrap metal and increase the country's industrial output. The goal was to improve productivity and increase efficiency. The opposite occurred, and millions of Chinese died of starvation during this era.

Another disaster began in 1966 and continued until Mao died in 1976. The **Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution** wreaked havoc on four thousand years of Chinese traditional culture in a purge of elitism and a drive toward total loyalty to the Communist Party. Armies of indoctrinated students were released into the countryside and the cities to report anyone opposing the party line. Schools were closed, universities were attacked, and intellectuals were killed. Anyone suspected of

subversion might be tortured into signing a confession. Violence, anarchy, and economic disaster followed this onslaught of anti-Democratic terror. Estimates vary, but most sources indicate that about thirty million people lost their lives during the Mao Zedong era through purges, starvation, and conflict.



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For decades in China, all travel in or out of China was severely restricted by the **Bamboo Curtain**. The United States had supported the nationalist movement during the Chinese Civil War and supported Chiang Kai-shek in Formosa (Taiwan). The United States did not recognize Communist China; the US embassy was in Taiwan, not in Beijing. As China was experiencing its disastrous experiments with Communism, the core economic areas of the world were advancing with commercial technology and high-tech electronics and sending rockets to the moon. China lagged in its industrial activities and became a country based on agriculture. A visit to China by US President Richard Nixon in 1972 signaled the opening

of diplomatic relations with the United States and was also viewed as a Cold War move against the Soviet Union.

Check out the Esri Story Map, [China: Then and Now](#) to analyze and spatially understand how China's rich history has helped inspire modern investments.

The Chinese Communist Party's approach when it took power was to institute a "planned economy." A planned economy, sometimes called a **command economy**, stands in marked contrast to a **market economy**. In a planned economy, the government controls how, where, why, and who creates the goods and services. Businesses are nationalized, meaning they are owned by the government rather than by any private entity. In contrast, in a market economy, businesses are privately owned, and most decisions are driven by consumer and investor behavior.

The decade of the 1980s was a transition for China in that there was a shift of focus from China's Communist economy to a more market-oriented economy. The economic collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s coincided with the opening of China to trade with the West. In 1992, China announced that it would transition to a socialist market economy, a hybrid of a Communist-planned economy and a

market economy. A series of statements by China's political leaders suggested that for China to enjoy a more mature form of socialism, greater national wealth was needed. They further indicated that socialism and poverty should not be considered synonymous and that the country was ready to turn its attention to increasing the wealth and quality of life of its citizens. During the next decade, China experienced enormous growth in its economy. At the beginning of this century, China was ranked in the top five of the world's largest trading nations, joining ranks with the United States, Germany, Japan, and France. The sheer size of China's population contributes to the magnitude of its economy. This does not, however, mean that most of China's population has a high standard of living.



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Political Units

China can be divided into regions utilizing various criteria:

political regions, economic regions, natural regions, and climatic regions, to name a few. The Communist government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) comprises several types of political units. The central region of China Proper includes twenty-two provinces, including the island province of **Hainan** in the south. The island, formerly known as Formosa, now called Taiwan, is considered by China to be its twenty-third province but, in actuality, remains under its government, the Republic of China (ROC). Mainland China includes five autonomous regions, each with a designated minority group; four municipalities; and two unique administrative regions (SARs) that hold considerable autonomy. All but Taiwan are included in the region called mainland China, except the SARs **Hong Kong** and **Macau**.



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The autonomous regions exist as a compromise between China and the regions that would prefer to be independent and have large non-Han or ethnic minority populations. These five autonomous regions are **Tibet**, **Guangxi**,

Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, and Ningxia. It should be noted that “autonomous” is how China would describe these regions, but that description is arguable. In reality, the autonomous regions have very little legal ability to govern themselves and have, in some ways, less autonomy than the provinces to pass their legislation.

Four of China’s cities have governance structures that are roughly on par with that of the provinces. The directly controlled municipalities are **Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai,** and **Chongqing** and encompass broad geographic areas beyond the city limits, including towns, villages, and rural areas.

The two SARs of China are Hong Kong and Macau. Hong Kong was part of the British Empire and later a British protectorate until its governance reverted to China in 1997. Known informally under Chinese law as “one country, two systems,” Hong Kong and Macau are guaranteed a high degree of autonomy for at least the first fifty years after the transfer from Britain to China. China is responsible for defense and some portions of foreign affairs, while Hong Kong and Macau are responsible for most other matters of state, including their legal systems, law enforcement, immigration laws, monetary systems, customs policies, and others.



Demographics



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Population

With four thousand years of culture to build on, China continues to press forward into the twenty-first century. In 2010, China had more people than any other country in the world, about 1.33 billion. Most of its people live in China Proper, in the eastern regions of the country. China Proper has the best agricultural lands in the country, the most fertile river basins, and the most moderate climates. For perspective, China has over one billion more people than the United States, with most of those people living in the southeastern portion of China. During Mao's time, there was little concern for population growth, but in recent decades China has implemented measures to deal with its teeming population.



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The government of China has taken the responsibility to address its growing population and the country's ability to provide for the needs of the additional populace. In 1978, China implemented the One-Child Only Policy, limiting

family size to one child. The policy allows for exemptions under certain conditions. Couples living in rural areas and people of minority status are two examples of exempted conditions and may be permitted more than one child, especially if the first child is a girl. Peripheral administrative regions like Macau and Hong Kong are exempt. The one-child-only policy was implemented to address environmental, economic, and social issues related to population growth. This policy has helped reduce China's potential population by hundreds of millions of people, but the controversial policy has not been easy to implement or make effective. There are growing concerns regarding the policy's negative impact on society. In response to the one-child-only policy, there have been reports of female infanticide and a higher number of abortions.



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Economic incentives pressured families to abide by the one-child-only policy: government benefits and social programs offered incentives that would be lost if couples had more than

one child. Enforcement of the policy was left to the provincial authorities with varying levels of success. Parents eager to have a boy to carry on the family name might abort a female baby. Though now illegal, the use of ultrasound equipment to determine the gender of a fetus is widespread. Some provinces in China have a severe shortage of women because of the policy; men in provinces where women are scarce may have to migrate to find a wife. In China, more boys are born than girls; the ratio averages more than 10 percent more boys than girls, with some provinces reaching more than 25 percent. This imbalance creates cultural issues that may have a negative impact on society. Traditional society is challenged when there are many unmarried young men in an area that may not have adequate employment opportunities for them or available women for potential marriage.

In 2016, China changed the policy's rules to allow Chinese citizens to have as many as two children. The concern is that China's citizens are aging. By 2040, nearly a quarter of the population will be 65 years of age or older. Furthermore, with the unequal distribution of males to females in the country, China's population could shrink dramatically, causing hardship on the economy and social welfare programs. Currently, the Chinese government is looking at removing the Two-Child Policy all-together, because, in 2018, birth rates in the country were at their lowest in over 50 years.



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More than 50 percent of China's population lives in rural areas, meaning there is potential for prominent levels of rural-to-urban migration. The core industrial cities located in China Proper attract migrants in a periphery-to-core migration pattern. China hopes that this urbanization and industrial activity will also support its population control methods and fuel the industrial labor base. China's urbanization increased at an unprecedented rate from 17 percent in 1978 to 47 percent in 2010. This rural-to-urban shift has been one of the largest in human history. It continues; many workers shift from holding temporary employment in the cities to returning to their families in the countryside between jobs.



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Ethnic Groups

Han Chinese is the largest ethnic group in China, with about 90 percent of the country's population. Some of the largest minority groups include Zhuang (Tai) in the south, Manchu in the northeast, Mongolian in the north-central region, Uyghur in Western China, and Tibetan in Tibet many other minority groups exist. The primary language in China, Mandarin, is spoken in different parts of the country, particularly in the north and the south. The number of languages in China (over 290) roughly corresponds to the number of ethnic groups in the country. In Western China, where the percentage of Han Chinese is quite low, most of the population is Uyghur, a group that tends to be Muslim. There are also Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Tajiks from Central Asia, who are also predominantly Muslim. In 2010, the precise number of Muslims in China was not known, but government reports indicated there were about twenty-one million. Other reports indicate there maybe three times that many. Minority groups like the Uyghurs have often

experienced discrimination by the Chinese government, which has taken measures to marginalize minority groups to keep them in check.



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Economics

In the past two decades, China has shifted its economy from a closed system with a centrally planned, government-controlled market to more open trade and a flexible production structure. These economic reforms have allowed capitalistic tendencies to drive production, have promoted increased involvement in private enterprise, and have increased international investment in the Chinese economy. China has phased out collective farms and has increased agricultural production; the approach to free enterprise and international trade and investment has become more open, and the Chinese economy has grown at a rapid rate. Open trade and interaction with the global community have allowed China to catch up with the rest of the world in terms of information and communication technology. Computer and Internet use in China has opened up many sectors to new opportunities and employment possibilities. China's policy of creating **special economic zones (SEZs)** has increased urban and economic growth in coastal cities, fueling the strong rural-to-urban shift.

<https://youtu.be/EvXROXiIpvQ>

The fast-paced growth of the Chinese economy in the past decade has brought with it some negative consequences. The exploitation of resources and the heavy utilization of the environment have resulted in severe soil erosion and air pollution. The water table in many parts of China has

decreased because of heavy demands on the nation's water supply. Arable land is being lost to erosion and inadequate land-use practices. Rural areas have not received consideration or resources equal to the coastal cities, so conditions remain poor for most rural people. Half of China's population earns the equivalent of a few dollars per day, while a fortunate few earn high salaries. Unemployment is at an elevated level for tens of millions of migrants who shift from location to location, looking for work. There is also an unfortunate degree of corruption within the government and state-run offices.



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Compared to Western countries, China is an authoritarian state that does not allow labor unions, free speech, freedom of religion, or freedom of the press. There has been more openness in China's economic reforms and travel, but other strict rules remain. There is no minimum wage law for factory workers who work long hours and do not receive benefits or sick leave. There are fewer safety requirements or government

regulations for security. China is trying to have the best of both worlds: the efficiency of an authoritarian government and an efficient market-driven capitalist economy. Sustaining the most massive standing army in the world, China is geared to become a global superpower. The next great world conflict could be a cultural war between the United States and China that would involve economic, political, and human issues.



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Growth of Enterprise and Industry

During the 1980s, following the death of Mao Zedong, China

went through a transition period. The new leader, Deng Xiaoping, realized that for China to compete in the world market, its economy would have to be modernized. The challenge was to open up to the outside without the outside placing pressure on the Communist system inside of China. The so-called Bamboo Curtain, which referred to the restriction of movement of goods and people across Chinese borders, diminished. To attract business and tap into the global market economy, China established SEZs along the coast at strategic port cities. SEZs attracted international corporations who wanted to manufacture goods cheaply, while China's population of 1.3 billion people provided an enormous labor pool and consumer market. China's modernization efforts paid off in the 1990s when world trade increased, and US trade with China exploded.



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By the year 2000, China had significantly profited because of its expanded manufacturing capacity. The coastal cities and the SEZs had become core industrial centers, attracting

enormous numbers of migrants—most of them poor agricultural workers—looking for work in the factories. Compared to other jobs, factory jobs are prized employment opportunities. The rural-to-urban shift has kicked in, and China's urban growth is occurring at unprecedented rates. Chinese people are moving to the cities looking for work, just like people in many other areas of the world. The SEZs encourage multinational corporations to move their overseas operations to China and take advantage of the lower labor and production costs. China benefits from the new business opportunities and by the creation of jobs for its citizens. SEZs operate under the objectives of providing tax incentives for foreign companies, exporting market-driven manufactured products, and creating joint partnerships to benefit everyone. In the past decade, four main cities have been designated as SEZs, along with the entire province of Hainan Island to the south. Many coastal cities were also designated as development areas for industrial expansion.



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In 2006, China's president called for an expansion of the economy to focus on more innovative activities. The government allowed additional funding for more research in genetics and gene therapy, computer software development, semiconductors, and alternative energy technologies. China has a high-level energy demand to fuel its expanding economy and provide for a large population, so alternative energy development has been expanding into wind and solar power for both domestic and commercial purposes. China's industrial sector is advancing to compete in the global marketplace and muscle into the high-tech economy once dominated by core areas of Japan, Western Europe, and the United States.



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Geopolitics

The political environment of China cannot be separated from its geography. To understand the larger political picture of China's position in the world, one must understand China's geography. In terms of its land area, China is a vast country. It includes an immense peripheral region surrounding China Proper consisting of minority populations and buffer states. The core of China is the Han Chinese heartland of China Proper. This is where most of the population lives and where the best agricultural land is located. The surrounding periphery consists of autonomous regions and minority populations, including Tibet, Western China, Inner Mongolia, and Northwestern China. Tibet is a buffer between China and India; high mountains provide a buffer between India and Tibet. Nepal, Bhutan, and Kashmir are also buffering states between China and South Asia. High mountain ranges extend all along China's western boundary.

Western China has a majority Muslim population closely aligned with ethnic groups in Central Asia. Inner Mongolia

and the independent country of Mongolia create a buffer between China and Russia. China's actual border with Russia is remote and distant. Northeast China was historically called Manchuria and is home to the Manchus, who are not Han Chinese. Even the isolated sovereign country of North Korea acts as a buffer between China and the world superpower of the United States through its surrogate South Korea. The border with Southeast Asia is mountainous with difficult terrain and minimal access. All these buffer regions insulate the Han heartland from the outside. China's power base is a territorial island insulated and isolated from the rest of the world. Technology and trade have opened links between the Han Chinese heartland and the global marketplace.

In the scope of **geopolitics** (the study of the geography of international relations), the core of China is protected on all fronts except one, the eastern coast. Coastal China is accessible to anyone with a ship. Coastal China is where Japan and the European colonialists such as France, Great Britain, Portugal, and Germany all came to carve up China for its imperial advancements. Also located along the coast is the island of Taiwan with the independent government of the ROC. Taiwan has been on friendly terms with the United States, which has posed a threat to the Chinese mainland. The coast makes China vulnerable. The challenge for China has been to neutralize the coastal threat and reduce its vulnerability. This is where the SEZs make a difference: the Chinese economy has relied on the SEZs to attract foreign

corporations to conduct their business with the Chinese in these coastal cities. The economic world has forged ties with the Chinese along China's coastal waters. The extensive coastal development creates a situation where it is now in everyone's best interest to make the coastal region of China safe and prosperous.

In the geopolitical sense, China has historically operated under three main premises. The first premise is that China must secure a buffer zone in the periphery, which includes the regions along China's borders. Second, the country needs to continue to maintain unity within the Han Chinese majority that anchors the core region of China Proper. The third component of China's geopolitical strategy is to protect and secure its vulnerable coastal region. The country needs to find a way to marginalize outside influence and keep the heartland protected from invaders. These three geopolitical directives were designed before the postindustrial economy emerged with the information age, but the main themes of securing and protecting China remain.



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China has additional political issues within the core region of China Proper. To maintain a unified Han Chinese powerbase, there should not be uneven levels of equity in the standards of living within the core region. Manufacturing has rapidly increased in the coastal cities of the SEZs and other development areas. The standard of living in the coastal cities has improved, creating a disparity between the coastal cities and the rural regions of the interior. Factory workers can earn the equivalent of fifty cents an hour, while their counterparts working in the fields in agriculture are only making the equivalent of a few dollars per day. As a Communist country, this was one of the basic foundational principles within a socialist society—the even distribution of wealth. It kept everyone on the same playing field, at least in theory. The more open capitalist economy is changing this and challenging the equality issue.

China is also economically disproportionately reliant on its ability to maintain a high level of export manufacturing as its method of gaining wealth. The country does not have a type of geography with adequate agricultural resources to provide for its vast population. Manufacturing requires good political and economic relationships with the international community. In summary, China's eastern coast development is a risk that China is forced to take. The risk is a trade-off.

On the one hand, the eastern coast is the most geopolitically vulnerable side of China, but on the other hand, it is where the most extensive economic gains have been

made in recent years. China's Bamboo Curtain has disappeared; it is no longer isolated from the rest of the world. Economic development has created a substantial degree of dependency on other countries through the doorways of China's coastal cities. China is becoming dependent on the outside world for oil, raw materials, and technology. Multinational corporations are dependent on China for low-cost manufactured goods. China is becoming more integrated within the network of the global economy.



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2.5 CHINA'S PERIPHERY

The heartland of China has always been part of China Proper. Surrounding China Proper is several autonomous regions, associated territories, and independent countries. These peripheral areas buffer China Proper from the rest of the world. They also provide China with either access to trade relationships or access to raw materials needed for development. Each peripheral political unit has its own unique physical and cultural characteristics and, in many cases, a minority population other than Han Chinese.



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Hong Kong and Shenzhen

Hong Kong is a former British colony and includes many

islands on the southern coast of China. Hong Kong includes the **Victoria** port, which is a deep-water port on the interior side of Hong Kong. The port is protected from the sea, allowing ship access to an extensive sheltered harbor area. To the north of Hong Kong Island is a peninsula called **New Territories**, which the British agreed to lease from China in 1897 for a period of ninety-nine years. Bordering the New Territories on the mainland is the rapidly growing industrial city of **Shenzhen**.



Hong Kong was a significant entry point into China for Britain during the colonial era. The colony was a British

outpost that created a doorway for British expansion into China. The port allowed for an early trade relationship to become established. The trade relationship was broken during the Korean War in the 1950s. Britain and China found themselves on opposite sides of the war. China was a newly created Communist country and sided with North Korea; Great Britain was a capitalist country and sided with South Korea. The boundary between the busy port of Hong Kong and China was closed, leaving Hong Kong with a world-class port, but no access to its main markets in China. Instead of closing the port and shutting down shipping, the business community of Hong Kong took advantage of its unique situation and first-rate port to create a world trade center. Ships would import raw materials, which would be processed or manufactured into finished products. The products would then be shipped back out at a profit.



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From the theory of how countries gain wealth, manufacturing has traditionally been the method with the highest value-

added profits. Hong Kong is an excellent example of this in action; that is, manufacturing was a successful method of gaining wealth for Hong Kong. First, low-level goods such as clothing and textiles were produced with Hong Kong's cheap labor and low costs. As business increased, higher-level technical goods were produced, such as radios and other electronic products. Incomes increased. Soon, Hong Kong was a business and banking center trading with all global markets. International trade attracted a robust financial network that enhanced the free market system in Hong Kong. Business in Hong Kong attracted attention in Beijing. Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, who had begun China's open-door policy in the 1980s, viewed Hong Kong as a primary access point to establish trade and commerce. In the 1990s, the economic zone of Shenzhen became a critical development area for Chinese industries and multinational corporations. China once again used Hong Kong as a significant trade corridor so that about one-fourth of all the country's imports and exports were being shipped through the port of Hong Kong.



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During the 1990s, as China actively invested in its industrial sector, it sought ways to attract the business generated by Taiwan and Hong Kong, two economic tigers. An opportunity came in 1997 when the ninety-nine-year lease of the New Territories to Britain expired. China did not want to renew the lease, so a deal covering all of Hong Kong was struck between China and Great Britain. Britain would relinquish all its claims to Victoria, the port, and all of Hong Kong if China would allow the area to remain non-Communist and under its autonomy for fifty more years. China agreed, and Britain left Hong Kong in 1997. Hong Kong became associated with mainland China as a unique autonomous region, but remained capitalist and democratic in its operations. The autonomy was suppose to last until July 1, 2047. This opened the door for Taiwan and other trading partners to increase trade with China through Hong Kong. Shenzhen, a **special economic zone** (SEZ) across the border from Hong Kong in China, was ready to capitalize on its accessibility to the port and the enormous trade that had been established by Hong Kong. Shenzhen became one of the fastest-growing cities globally and has become a center of

manufacturing and trade for the global economy. It grew from a moderately sized city of about three hundred fifty thousand in the early 1980s to a city of over 12.5 million by 2020. Shenzhen has established a port of its own and is a magnet for international trade.

More than 95 percent of the 7.5 million people living in Hong Kong are ethnically Chinese. The people have strong ties to mainland China, but highly value their separate and independent economic and political status. Hong Kong is a major financial and banking center for Asia and has been working with the Chinese government to provide private banking services for Chinese citizens. The small land size of Hong Kong makes it a high-priced real estate destination. The cost of living is high, and space is at a premium and expensive.



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Nevertheless, Hong Kong attracts millions of visitors per year and has established itself as a tourism hub for people desiring to visit southern China. Tens of millions of tourists each year use Hong Kong as a base or stopover point to enter China's southern provinces. Hong Kong offers visitors immense shopping possibilities in a safe and modern environment that is attractive to people from all over the world. Cantonese is the official language, but English is widely spoken in Hong Kong because of Britain's influence and because of world trade relationships.

Across the Pearl River Estuary to the west is the former Portuguese colony of Macau. The arrangement between China and the British government over Hong Kong provided a pattern that was also applied to Macau. At the end of 1999, Portugal relinquished its claim to Macau, and the colony was turned over to the Chinese government under an agreement similar to the agreement between Britain and China regarding Hong Kong. Macau was enabled to retain its autonomy and free-market economy for fifty years as it becomes a unique administrative region (SAR) of China. Macau is a much

smaller territory than Hong Kong and home to only about half a million residents.



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Taiwan (ROC)

Taiwan is separated from the Chinese mainland by the Taiwan Strait. As of 2020, the population of the island, which is about the size of the US state of Maryland is over 23,826,000. The island is mountainous and has rugged national parks in its interior, while most of the people in Taiwan live in bustling cities along the coast. Taiwan's push for good education and technical skills for its citizens has paid off in the form of high incomes and an industrialized economy. After World War II, when China raised its Bamboo Curtain, the United States cut its trade relations with the Communist mainland. However, the United States did trade a great deal with the Nationalists in Taiwan. The deep tensions that exist between China and Taiwan are easy to understand, given the history that led to Taiwan's current existence. One of the flashpoints in China-Taiwan relations has been the "One China" policy. Originally asserted by Beijing, the principle contends that there is only one indivisible China, which encompasses all of China, including Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, and Tibet.



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During the Cold War, the sizeable mainland China population was attractive to US corporations that sought trade with China. In 1972, for the benefit of the United States and to counter the influence of the Soviet Union, US president Richard Nixon organized a visit to Beijing that opened the door to US-China diplomatic relations. There were conditions placed on the open-door agreement that followed. One condition that mainland China imposed was for the US government to recognize the Communist government in Beijing as official China. To do this, the United States had to move its US embassy from **Taipei**, the capital city of Taiwan to Beijing, and recognize only the Beijing government as official China. The United States agreed to this policy. As a result, no government official in the US State Department, cabinet-level or higher, can officially visit Taiwan; at the same time, no equal-level diplomat from Taiwan can officially visit the United States. This policy placed Taiwan in an ambiguous position: Is Taiwan an independent country, or is it a part of mainland China?

Mainland China has always demanded that in order for countries to have good relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC), they must not recognize Taiwan (the Republic of China, or ROC). This has caused intermittent problems for the United States and other countries. The termination of diplomatic relations between the United States and the ROC was a considerable blow for Taiwan, even though the United States continued to conduct trade with the island. The United States has always supported Taiwan's economic independence. In 2007, the United States sold military arms to Taiwan. As a result, China began to deny routine access to its ports for US ships. Taiwan's status on the world stage has fluctuated. For about twenty years after the Nationalists set up a government in Taiwan, the ROC held a seat in the United Nations (UN), and the UN-recognized Taiwan's claim as the legitimate government of China. In 1971, the UN changed its position and gave the seat to Beijing. The UN indicated it could not give a seat to Taiwan because Taiwan is not recognized as a legal nation.



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In 2000, Taiwan renewed its efforts to be internationally recognized as a sovereign nation and announced tentative plans to secede from China formally. China responded with many threats and conducted military exercises across the strait from Taiwan. The military exercises were another threat; a show of military might meant to intimidate Taiwan into retreating from its secessionist position. The United States supported Taiwan by parking a naval fleet nearby, which incensed the mainland government. In 2005, China passed a law authorizing the use of military force to stop any Taiwan secessionist actions.



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Taiwan's economy continues to use its skilled labor base. In years past, Taiwan's factories produced textiles and light clothing. As incomes and skills advanced, production shifted to electronics and high-end goods, which it has since been exporting around the world. Taiwan has achieved a high standard of living for its people. When trade opened through Hong Kong with mainland China, many Taiwanese

industries shifted production to the SEZs along China's coast. Labor in SEZs is less expensive, leading to a corresponding rise in profits. Unfortunately, this has resulted in higher unemployment levels in Taiwan.

In the past few years, Taiwan's focus has turned from secession to trade. In 2008, Taiwan elected a government that, though nationalist in its ideology, is committed to strengthening trade and investment with China. Taiwan entered the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** in 2001 using the name **Chinese Taipei**. That move started a cascade of actions that improved "cross-strait" trading conditions, and direct trade between China and Taiwan has become extensive within just a few years. The question of Taiwan's political status is still unresolved and still volatile, but trade and investment between China and Taiwan are robust and growing. Taiwan has been able to independently compete in world-class sporting events, including the Olympics, under the name Chinese Taipei.

Autonomous Region of Tibet

Located in mountainous southwestern China, Tibet is classified as one of China's autonomous regions, a disputed political arrangement. It is debatable whether Tibet or any of the other Chinese regions are autonomous. The legal structures allow for very little self-governance, and most new

initiatives require approval from the Chinese central government. Tibet had been an independent entity through much of its history and governed itself as a Buddhist theocracy. Its theocratic political system established the Dalai Lama as both the head of state and the religious leader of the Tibetan people.



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Tibet has had a complicated history with China. This is as true of its early history as it is today. In its early history, Tibet was an independent kingdom with its unique type of Buddhism as its state religion. During this era, a system of Lamaism, a hierarchy of monks or other religious leaders, took hold. In the tenth century, China's influence in Tibet waxed and waned during the later years of the kingdom. The Mongols subsumed Tibet into their empire during the first part of their conquests in the thirteenth century. However, in the fifteenth century, the Mongols gave considerable local authority to the Dalai Lama, making him the spiritual leader as well as an influential political figure.

Tibet came under the control of China during the Qing Dynasty. When imperialist rule ended in China in 1911, Tibet began to assert its independence once again. Chinese, British, and Tibetan officials met and came up with an agreement that partitioned Tibet into Inner Tibet, which would be controlled by China, and Outer Tibet, independent. China later indicated its intention to control all of Tibet, a move much resented by the Tibetan people.



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When Communists took control of China in 1949, the Dalai Lama was initially allowed control over domestic affairs while China-controlled all other governmental functions. The Chinese government then took steps to limit the powers of the Dalai Lama and the **Panchen Lama** (spiritual leader). Intending to spread Communism to Tibet, China destroyed monasteries, religious symbols, and icons, and other long-practiced ways of life were threatened. The Tibetans considered the Chinese political dominance a malevolent and

invading force. Monasteries were burned, monks were beaten or imprisoned, and Buddhism was brutally suppressed.



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Tibetans revolted in 1956. Backed by the United States, the revolt continued even as China indicated it would suspend the transformation of Tibet. China brutally crushed the revolt in 1959, leaving tens of thousands of Tibetans dead or imprisoned. The Dalai Lama and thousands of Tibetans fled to Dharamshala, India, where they established a government in exile. At this point, China had a firm grip on Tibet, and in 1965 the reorganization of Tibet into a Chinese socialist region began in full force.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, China expressed some willingness to relent in its authoritarian control of Tibet. However, they demanded that the Dalai Lama renounce claims of Tibetan independence, which he refused. Demonstrations and continued violence occurred throughout this period. Chinese-Tibetan relations were further damaged when the Panchen Lama died mysteriously shortly after

criticizing socialist reform in Tibet. The Panchen Lama is the next-highest Buddhist official under the Dalai Lama. There is now a controversy with the Chinese government over the selection of the eleventh Panchen Lama. China and Tibet both claimed the authority over choosing the Panchen Lama, and each named a different person to take on the role. The situation illustrates the conflict over the minds and the people of Tibet.



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The Dalai Lama

The **Dalai Lama** is the spiritual and political leader of all Tibetans. The Dalai Lama is thought to be the current incarnation of past Buddhist Masters, or Tulkus. The Masters have grown behind the cycle of death and rebirth and choose their own time of rebirth to help educate humanity in how to live. As indicated, the Dalai Lama was always considered the head of state for the government of Tibet and its capital was located in **Lhasa**. Tenzin Gyatso is the rebirth of the thirteenth

Dalai Lama. When he was fifteen years old, on November 17, 1950, he became Tibet's fourteenth Dalai Lama. This occurred only one month after China's invasion of Tibet. The Dalai Lama originally, under military pressure from China, ratified the 1951 Seventeen Point agreement. In 1959, he left Tibet and went into exile in India. China has crushed any attempt of Tibetan resistance. While in India, the Dalai Lama has established the Tibetan government in exile and is attempting to preserve Tibetan culture among the thousands of refugees that have accompanied him.



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Mongolia

Mongolia ranks as the world's nineteenth-largest country in terms of square miles. Mongolia shares similar geography with much of Kazakhstan, which is the world's largest land-locked nation; Mongolia is the second largest. Despite Mongolia's vast land area (slightly smaller than the US state of Alaska or

the country of Iran), its population is only about three million, and the country is the least densely populated in the world. Mountains, high plains, and grass-covered steppe cover much of Mongolia, a country that receives only between four and ten inches of rain per year, which usually comes in the form of snow. The Gobi Desert to the south, extending from southern Mongolia into northern China, receives even less precipitation. **Inner Mongolia** is a sparsely inhabited autonomous region south of Mongolia that is governed by the Chinese government.



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Mongolia's modern capital city of **Ulan Bator** is home to about one-third of Mongolia's people; it has the coldest average temperature of any world capital. Mongolia's history includes the vast Mongol Empire of Genghis Khan, which was established in the thirteenth century. The Soviet Union used Mongolia as a buffer state with China. Mongolia's Communist party dominated politics until the Soviet Union collapsed in the 1990s. The current government in Ulan Bator

must contend with Mongolia's position between the two giant economies of Russia and China.



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Tibetan Buddhism is the dominant religion in Mongolia and is practiced by about 50 percent of the population. The Communist influence is evident in that approximately 40 percent of the population considers itself nonreligious. Most of the people are of Mongol ethnicity. Today, about 30 percent of the people are still seminomadic and migrate seasonally to accommodate good grazing for their livestock. A round **yurt**, which can be constructed at whatever location is selected for the season and disassembled for mobility, is the traditional dwelling. Mongolian culture and heritage revolve around a rural agrarian culture with extensive reliance on the horse. Archery, wrestling, and equestrian events are some of the most popular sporting activities.

Mongolia's economy has traditionally been centered on agriculture, but mining has grown in recent years to be a significant economic sector. Mongolia has abundant mineral

resources of coal, molybdenum, copper, gold, tin, and tungsten. Being landlocked cuts Mongolia off from the global economy, but the vast amounts of mineral reserves are in demand by core industrial areas for manufacturing and should boost the poor economic conditions that dominate Mongolia's economy. China has increased its business presence in Mongolia and has been drawing Mongolia's attention away from its former Soviet ally to become a significant trading partner.

2.6 JAPAN

Japan consists of islands that lie along the Pacific Rim east of China and across the **Sea of Japan** (East Sea) from the Korean Peninsula. Most of the archipelago, which has more than three thousand islands, is just north of 30° latitude. Four islands make up most of the country: **Shikoku**, **Kyushu**, **Hokkaido**, and **Honshu**. The islands have tall mountains originating from volcanic activity. Many of the volcanoes are active, including the famous Mount Fuji. The physical area of all Japan's islands is equivalent to the size of the US state of Montana. The mountainous islands of Japan extend into two climate zones. All but the northern region of Japan has a type C climate. The island of Hokkaido in northern Japan has a type D climate and receives enough snow for downhill skiing. Japan hosted the Winter Olympics in 1998. **Mt. Fuji**, located just west of **Tokyo**, is a widely photographed mountain because of its symmetrical volcanic cone.



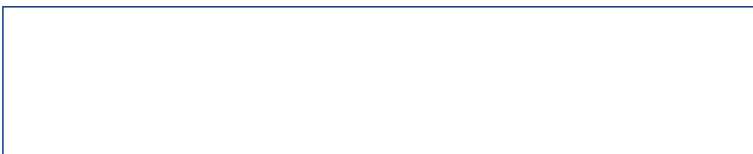
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Cities like Mexico City, São Paulo, and Bombay, which have vast slum communities, each claims to be the world's largest city but lacks firm census data to verify its population. The largest metropolitan urban area in the world that can be verified is Tokyo, with a population of 26.7 million. The Tokyo metropolitan area is in a vast agricultural region called the Kanto Plain and includes the conurbation of Tokyo, **Yokohama**, and **Kawasaki**. The second-largest urban area in Japan is located in the **Kansai District** and includes the cities of **Kobe**, **Osaka**, and **Kyoto**. Japan is a mountainous region, and most of its large cities are in low-lying areas along the coast. Most of the population (67 percent) lives in urban areas such as Japan's core area, an urbanized region from Tokyo to Nagasaki. The 2010 population of Japan was listed at about 126 million, less than half the size of the United States. Ironically, the world's largest metropolitan area is built on one of the worst places to build a city. Tokyo is located where three tectonic plates meet: the Eurasian Plate, the Philippine Plate, and the Pacific Plate. Earthquakes result when these plates shift, leading to possibly extensive damage and destruction. In 1923, a massive earthquake struck the Tokyo

area and killed an estimated 143,000 people. In 1995, an earthquake near Kobe killed about 5,500 people and injured another 26,000.

In March 2011, a magnitude 9.0 earthquake struck forty-three miles off the eastern coast of northern Japan. The earthquake itself caused extensive damage to the island of Honshu. After the earthquake, a shockwave created a tsunami more than 130 feet high that crashed into the eastern coast of Japan, causing enormous damage to infrastructure and loss of life. Hundreds of aftershocks were recorded; at least three registered over 7.0 in magnitude. This is the strongest earthquake ever to hit Japan in recorded history. It resulted in more than 15,500 deaths and wreaked severe damage across Japan in the value of billions of dollars. Thousands of additional people remain missing. Nuclear power plants along the coast were struck by the tsunami, which knocked out their cooling systems and resulted in the meltdown of at least three reactors. The nuclear meltdowns created explosions that released a sizeable quantity of nuclear material into the atmosphere. This is considered the worst nuclear accident since the 1986 reactor meltdown at the Soviet plant at Chernobyl, located north of Kyiv in present-day Ukraine. The next big earthquake could happen at any time since Japan is in an active tectonic plate zone.





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Development

The country of Japan is an interesting study in isolation geography and economic development. For centuries, shogun lords and samurai warriors ruled Japan, and Japan's society was highly organized and structured. Urban centers were well planned, and skilled artisans developed methods of creating high-grade metal products. While agriculture was always important, Japan always existed as a semi-urban community because the mountainous terrain forced most of the population to live along the country's coasts. To begin with, without a mostly rural population, Japan never really experienced the rural-to-urban shift typical in the rest of the world. Coastal fishing, always a prominent economic activity, remains so today. The capital city of Tokyo, formerly called **Edo**, was a significant city even before the colonial era. Japan developed its unique type of urbanized cultural heritage.



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Encounters with European colonial ships prompted Japan to industrialize. For the most part, the Japanese kept the Europeans out and only traded with select ships that were allowed to approach the shores. The fact that European ships were there was enough to convince the Japanese to evaluate their position in the world. During the colonial era, Britain was the most avid colonizer with the most extensive and best-equipped navy on the high seas. Britain colonized parts of the Americas, the Middle East, Africa, South Asia, and Australia and was advancing in East Asia when they met the Japanese. Both Japan and Great Britain are island countries. Japan reasoned that if Great Britain could become so powerful, they should also have the potential to become powerful. Japan encompassed several islands and had more land than Britain, but did not have the coal and iron ore reserves that Britain had.

Around 1868, a group of reformers worked to bring about a change in direction for Japan. Named after the emperor, the movement was called the **Meiji Restoration** (the return of

enlightened rule). Japanese modernizers studied the British pattern of development. The Japanese reformers were advised by the British how to organize their industries and how to layout transportation and delivery systems. Today, the British influence in Japan is easily seen in that both Japanese and British drivers drive on the left side of the road. The modernizers realized that to compete on the high seas in the world community, they had to move beyond samurai swords and wooden ships. Iron ore and coal would have to become the goods to fuel their industrial revolution. Labor and resources were valuable elements of early industrialization in all areas of the world, including Asia.



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Japan began to industrialize and build its economic and military power by first utilizing the few resources found in Japan. Since it was already semi-urban and had an organized social order with skilled artisan traditions, the road to industrialization moved quickly. Japan needed raw materials and expanded to take over the island of Formosa (Taiwan) and

the Korean Peninsula in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Japan was on its way to becoming a colonial power. They expanded to take control of the southern part of **Sakhalin Island** from Russia and part of Manchuria (Northeast China) from the Chinese. Japanese industries proliferated as they put the local people they subjugated to work and extracted the raw materials they needed from their newly taken colonies.

The three-way split in China revealed that the Japanese colonizers were a significant force in China even after the other European powers had halted their colonial activities. Japan's relative location as an independent island country provided both quick access to their neighbors and also protection from them. By World War II, Japan's economic and military power had expanded until they were dominating Asia's Pacific Rim community. The Japanese military believed that they could invade the western coast of North America and eventually take control of the entire United States. Their attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in 1941, was meant to be only a beginning. History has recorded the outcome. The United States rallied its people and resources to fight against the Japanese in World War II. The Soviet Union also turned to fight the Japanese empire. The end came after atomic bombs, one each, were dropped by the United States on the Japanese cities of **Hiroshima** and **Nagasaki**. The terms of Japan's surrender in 1945 stipulated that Japan had to give up claims on the Russian is-lands, Korea, Taiwan, China, and all

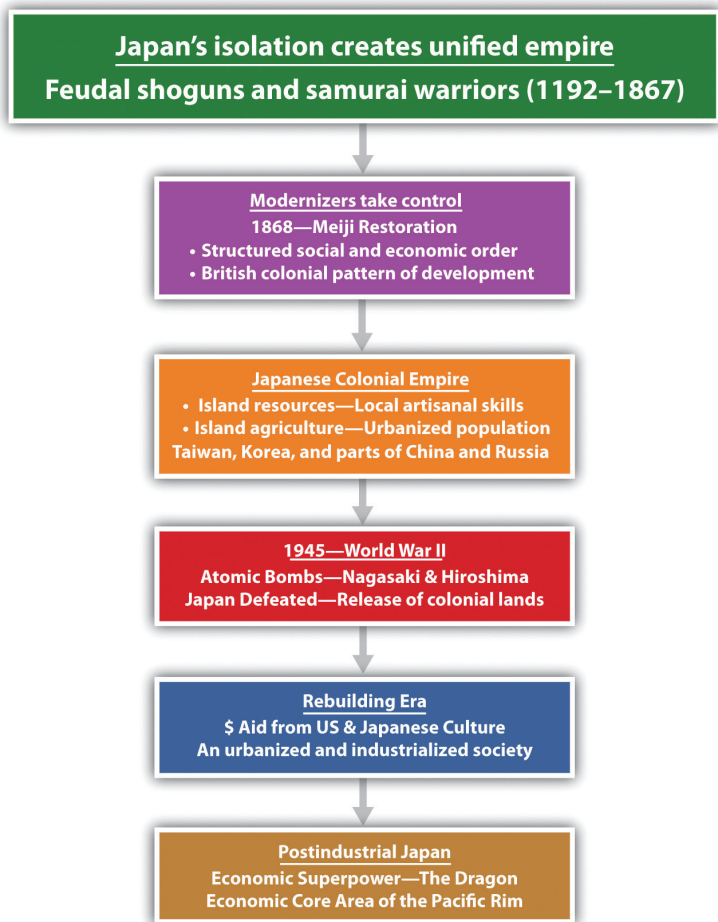
the other places that they had previously controlled. Japan also lost the **Kurile Islands**, off its northern shores, to the Soviet Union. The islands have never been returned. Japan offered Russia an enormous amount of cash for them, but the matter remains unresolved. The Kurile Island chain continues to be controlled by Russia. Japan also agreed not to have a military for offensive purposes. Japan was decimated during World War II, its infrastructure and economy destroyed.

Economic Growth

Since 1945, Japan has risen to become Asia's economic superpower and the economic center of one of the three core areas of the world. Japanese manufacturing has set a standard for global production. Think of all the automobiles that are Japanese products: Toyota, Honda, Mitsubishi, Subaru, Nissan, Isuzu, Mazda, and Suzuki. How many Russian, Brazilian, Chinese, or Indonesian autos are sold in the United States? The term "economic tiger" is often used in Asia to indicate an entity with an aggressive and fast-growing economy. However, Japan has surpassed this benchmark and is called the **Economic Dragon** of Asia. The four economic tigers competing with Japan are Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea. Japan came back from total devastation in 1945 to become a world economic superpower.

Japan's recovery in the last half of the century was

remarkable. If an island nation like Japan could accomplish this rapid growth in its economy, why couldn't other similar-sized countries accomplish the same level of growth? What was it that caused the Japanese people to recover quickly and rise above the world's standard to excel in their economic endeavors? The answer could be related to the fact that Japan already had an industrialized and urbanized society before the war. The United States did help rebuild some of Japan's infrastructure that had been destroyed during World War II, things like ports and transportation systems to help bring aid and provide for humanitarian support. However, the Japanese people were able to not only recover from the devastation of World War II but also rise to an economic superpower to compete with the United States. Japan used internal organization and strong centripetal dynamics to create a highly functional and cohesive society that focused its drive and fortitude on creating a manufacturing sector that catapulted the country's economy from devastation to financial success.



The same dynamics can be applied to Germany after World War II, when the war destroyed the country. The Allied powers decimated Germany's infrastructure and resources. Today, Germany is the most robust economy in all of Europe. Part of the reason Germany came back to become so economically successful was its industrialized and urbanized society. Germany also was able to access resources. Again,

think of all the automobiles that are German products: Mercedes, Volkswagen, Porsche, BMW, and Audi. The pattern of economic growth was like Germany and Japan. The loss of colonies after World War II prompted Japan to look elsewhere for its raw materials. Extensive networks of trade were developed to provide the necessary materials for the rapidly growing manufacturing sector. The urbanized regions around Tokyo, including the Yokohama and Kawasaki cities, swelled to accommodate the growth of industry. Japan's coastal interior has several large cities and urban areas that rapidly increased with the growing manufacturing sector.

The basis for Japan's technological and economic development may be related to its geographic location and cultural development. Japan's economic development pattern has similarities to the patterns of other Asian entities that have created thriving economic conditions. Hong Kong and Taiwan are both small islands with few natural resources, yet they have become economic tigers. Taiwan exports computer products to the United States, but Russia, with all its natural resources, millions of people, and large land area, does not. Explaining how or why countries develop at different rates can be complicated because there may be many interrelated explanations or reasons. One element might be centripetal cultural forces that hold a country together and drive it forward. The ability to manage labor and resources would be another part of the economic situation. The theory of how countries gain wealth may shed some light on this issue. Japan

used manufacturing as a primary means of gaining wealth from value-added profits. This is the same method the Asian economic tigers also developed their economies. Japan developed into a core economic country that took advantage of the peripheral countries for labor and resources during the colonial era. Japan took advantage of every opportunity that presented itself to become a world manufacturing center.

Modern Japan

Japan is a homogeneous society. In 2010, all but 1 percent of the population was ethnically Japanese. Japan resembles a nation-state, where people of a common heritage and aspirations hold to a unified government. This provides a robust centripetal force that unites the people under one culture and one language. However, religious allegiances in Japan vary, and many people indicate nonreligious ideologies.

Shintoism and **Buddhism** are the main religious traditions. Shintoism includes the veneration of ancestors and the divine forces of nature. There is no one single written text for Shintoism; the religion is a loosely knit set of concepts based on morality, attitude, sensibility, and right practice. A Shinto priest can conduct a wedding for a couple, whereas a Buddhist priest might conduct the funeral (hope-fully taking place much later) for either of the spouses. Buddhism that is practiced in Japan, is more meditative than mystical.



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Modernization has brought new opportunities and problems for the Japanese people. With a highly urban and industrial society, personal incomes in Japan are high, and family size is quite small, at about 1.2 children. The replacement level for a given population is about 2.1 children, which means Japan has a declining population. The population is aging, and there are not enough young people to take entry-level jobs. The family has been at the center of Japanese tradition, and the elderly have been venerated and honored. As the country has become more economically developed, higher incomes for young people have prompted a shift toward convenience and consumer amenities. Consumer goods are available, but all the oil and about 60 percent of the food products must be imported. During the offseason, fruit, for example, is expensive. Beef is at a premium price, so fish is a staple source of protein. Income levels are high, but the cost of living in places like Tokyo is also quite high.

Japan is facing a labor shortage for many low-level service jobs that had traditionally been held by young people entering

the workforce. Japan is an island country that has prided itself on being 99 percent Japanese. Countries in stage 5 of the index of economic development usually enter a negative population growth pattern. According to population statistics, Japan is at the start of a severe population decline, with a negative population growth pattern. While Western Europe and the United States also have a declining percentage of young people, in those countries, the declining youth cohort has been replaced by an elevated level of immigration, both legal and illegal. Culturally, this is not an attractive option for Japan, but they are forced to address the labor shortage in any way. Their economy will depend on the ability to acquire cheap labor and resources to compete in the global marketplace.



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Centripetal Forces Hold a State Together

- Ethnic Unity and Tolerance
- Social/Economic Equity
- Just and Fair Legal System
- Charismatic Leadership
- Religious Acceptance
- Nationalism
- Common Heritage
- Common Language
- Any Other Unifying Force

As the economic dragon of Asia, Japan has had an enormous economic impact on the East Asian Community (EAC). The shortage of cheap labor has forced Japan to look elsewhere for new manufacturing ventures. China is an attractive country in this respect because of its substantial population and low standard of living for many of its citizens. Japan is looking to take advantage of its geographical location to establish a more favorable trade situation with its Asian neighbors. The dynamics of its economy are uniquely like that of the United States and Europe. All three core economic areas are competing for inexpensive labor and resources to fuel their economies. China has been a significant destination for manufacturing production because of its low labor costs and

attractive financial incentives. During World War II, China and Japan were locked in a bitter war that caused harsh animosities to take root against each other. The two countries have not historically been friendly toward each other. Japan's history as a colonizer has caused serious cultural attitudes against it from its Asian neighbors. Nevertheless, economics usually drives politics, and Japan wields enormous economic power. Japan now engages in trade with China and continues to be a core economic country in the global economy.



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2.7 KOREAN PENINSULA

The Korean Peninsula juts out into the Pacific Rim from northwestern Asia. The peninsula is bound by the **Sea of Japan** (the East Sea) and the **Yellow Sea**. North and South Korea share the peninsula. These countries have been separated by the Korean **demilitarized zone (DMZ)** since 1953. To the west and north is China, and to the far north, along the coast of Russia. Korea is separated from China by the Yellow Sea and the Yalu and Tumen Rivers to the north. The Yalu and Tumen rivers form the border between North Korea and China. Japan is located just east of the Korean Peninsula across the **Korean Strait**. The Korean Peninsula is now split between South Korea and North Korea. The capital city of North Korea is **Pyongyang**, and **Seoul** is the capital of South Korea.



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The topography of the Korean Peninsula is mountainous, with arable or cultivable land in high demand. Approximately 70 percent of the Korean Peninsula is mountainous. The bedrock is composed of volcanic and granitic rocks that glacial processes have severely modified over the past twenty-five thousand years. The highest peak in North Korea rises more than nine thousand feet. The Korean Peninsula can be thought of as four general areas:

- Western Region with an extensive coastal plain, river basins, and small foothills
- Eastern Region with high mountain ranges and a narrow coastal plain
- Southeastern Basin
- Southwestern Region of mountains and valleys

Off the southern and western coasts of the Korean Peninsula are about three thousand small and mostly uninhabited islands, all within the territory of South Korea. South Korea's largest island has an area of 712 square miles. It is the highest point of land in South Korea, at 6,398 feet above sea level.

Story Map: The Two Koreas, to spatially analyze the two in actions and their historical tensions and conflicts.

The physical size in square miles of North Korea or South Korea is like the physical area of the US state of Kentucky. North Korea is slightly larger, and South Korea is slightly smaller. For centuries, Korea was a unified kingdom that outsiders often invaded. After the fall of the Chinese Qing (Manchu) Dynasty, the Japanese took control of the Korean Peninsula (1910) and controlled it as a colony. Japanese colonial rule ended in 1945 when the United States defeated Japan, forcing it to give up its colonial possessions. The structure of modern Korea is a result of the ending of World War II. North and South Korea have very different yet related environmental issues, primarily related to the degree of industrialization. With a low level of industrialism, North Korea has severe issues of water pollution as well as deforestation and related soil erosion and degradation. Other issues in North Korea include inadequate clean drinking water supplies and many waterborne diseases. South Korea has water pollution associated with sewage discharge and industrial effluent from its many industrial centers. Air pollution is sometimes severe in larger cities, contributing to higher acid rain levels.



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The conclusion of World War II was a critical period for the Korean Peninsula. The United States and the Soviet Union both fought against the Japanese in Korea. When the war was over, the Soviet Union took administrative control of the peninsula north of the thirty-eighth parallel. The United States established administrative control over the area south of the thirty-eighth parallel. The United States and the Soviet Union divided Korea approximately in half and eventually established governments in their respective regions that were sympathetic to each nation's ideology. The Soviet Union administered the northern portion; the United States administered the southern region. Politics deeply affected each of the regions. Communism dominated North Korea, and capitalism dominated South Korea. In 1950, with aid from China and the Soviet Union, the Communists from the north invaded the south. After bitter fighting, a peace agreement was reached in 1953 to officially divide the Korean Peninsula near the thirty-eighth parallel. Korea remains divided to this day. The United States has thousands of soldiers stationed along the **Cease-Fire Line**, now called the **Demilitarized Zone**, the most heavily guarded border.



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North Korea

The government of North Korea (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or DPRK) was formed with the leadership of Communist dictator **Kim Il Sung**, who shaped his country with a mix of Soviet and Chinese authoritarian rule. Having limited personal freedoms, the people worked hard to rebuild a state. Using the threat of a US military invasion to rally his people, Kim Il Sung built up a military of more than one million soldiers, one of the largest in the world. People could not travel in or out of the country without strict regulations. North Korea existed without much notice until the 1990s when things suddenly changed.

When the Soviet Union fell in 1991, North Korea lost a valued financial support and oil source. Without fuel and funding, many of the factories closed. Unemployment rates rose significantly. Meanwhile, China adopted a more open posture and began increasing its trade with the West. The

result was that China began to lose interest in propping up North Korea politically. As massive food shortages caused famine and starvation, North Korea faced severe social and economic hardships. Kim Il Sung died in 1994, and the country lost its “**Great Leader**.” He had ruled the country since World War II and was deified as a god to be worshiped by the people.

The government dictatorship continued as the Great Leader’s son, **Kim Jong Il**, took over the leadership role, repressing his people to new levels. Televisions and radios sold in North Korea can only receive government-controlled frequencies. Cell phones and the Internet are banned. The government takes a hard line against dissenters. If someone is caught speaking against the state or acting to support dissent, they can be arrested, fined, placed in a prison camp, or executed. People are not allowed to leave or enter the country without government approval. Only a couple hundred tourists are allowed into the country annually and are carefully escorted.

Kim Jong Il took hard measures to stay in power and to avoid yielding to the capitalist frenzy of corporate colonialism. He has nuclear weapon capability and has used his military weapons production as a bargaining chip against the United States and other world powers. North Korea has demonized the United States as the ultimate threat and has used state-funded propaganda to indoctrinate its people. North Korea’s government continually tells its people that the United States

will invade at any minute and to be prepared for the worst. Propaganda has been used to create and enforce military, economic, and political policies for an ideology that supports the unification of all of Korea under Communist control.

In 2011, Kim Jong Il passed away, and his son, **Kim Jong Un** became the new and current dictator of North Korea.



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North Korea is mainly mountainous; there is little quality farmland. While only 2 percent of the land is in permanent crops, about a third of the population works in agriculture. The best farmland in North Korea is located south of the

capital city of Pyongyang. The capital is a restricted area where only the most loyal to the state can live. There is a severe shortage of goods and services, and electricity is not available on a dependable basis. Only through extensive international food aid has the people of North Korea survived. Outside food aid is accepted even though Kim Jong Il has continued a self-reliance policy and self-sufficiency called **Juche**. Juche is designed to keep Korea from becoming dependent on the outside. The policy of Juche has been quite effective in isolating North Korea and keeping dictator Kim Jong Il in power. The Juche policy also holds back the wave of corporate capitalism that seeks to exploit labor and resources in global markets for economic profit.

One way North Koreans find out about the outside world is through smuggled-in cell phones and VHS videotapes from South Korea. Popular VHS productions include South Korean soap operas because of their shared heritage, language, and ethnicity. The North Korean government has attempted to stop smuggled videotapes by going from home to home. Electricity is turned off before entering the home. Once the electricity is turned off, videotapes cannot be removed from the video player. The government agents then recover the videotape. Citizens found with smuggled videotapes are punished with steep fines or imprisonment. Desperate North Koreans have escaped across the border into northern China, where thousands of refugees have sought better future opportunities. It is ironic that Communist China, with

historically few human rights, would be a place where people would seek refuge. Still, China's economy is growing, and North Korea's economy is stagnant, which creates strong push-pull forces on migration.



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South Korea

In 1993, South Korea became a fully-fledged democracy with its first democratically elected president. Seoul is the capital city and is home to almost ten million people. Seoul is located just south of the Cease-Fire Line, also known as the DMZ, which is referred to in general terms as the thirty-eighth parallel, even though it does not follow it strictly. The United States has many military installations in this area.

South Korea manufactures automobiles, electronic goods, and textiles that are sold around the world. South Korea is a democracy that has used state capitalism to develop its economy. After World War II, South Korea was ruled by a

military government that implemented land reform and received external economic aid. Large agricultural estates were broken up and redistributed to the people. Agricultural production increased to meet the demands of the population. South Korea has more agricultural production than North Korea and provides food for the high population density. A once-modest manufacturing sector has become a major export trade production center.



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The fifty million people who live in South Korea have a much higher standard of living than the residents of North Korea. Personal income in the north is barely equivalent to a few dollars per day, while personal income in the south is similar to that of Western countries. The economic growth of the south was a result of state-controlled capitalism rather than free-enterprise capitalism. The state has controlled or owned most industrial operations and sold its products globally. Giant corporations, which forced industrialization along the coastal region, have promoted South Korea as the world's

leading shipbuilding nation. South Korean corporations include Daewoo, Samsung, Kia Motors, Hyundai, and the Orion Group. As an economic tiger, South Korea continues to reform its economic system to adapt to global economic conditions.

South Korea has announced plans to overhaul its energy and transportation networks comprehensively. Government funding will augment efforts to create more green-based initiatives. Part of this effort will focus on lower energy dependency with environmentally friendly energy developments such as wind, solar, bike lanes, and new lighting technologies. High-speed rail service and increased capacity in electronic transmission lines are planned as part of the next generation of energy-efficient technologies that will increase economic efficiency. These policies have been enacted to update South Korea's economy and create new products for manufacturing export.

Buddhism was introduced into the Korean Peninsula, as were many other aspects of Chinese culture that significantly affected Korean heritage. Buddhism has been a prominent religion in Korea for centuries. The teachings of Confucius are also widely regarded. About 30 percent of the population claims Christianity as their religious background; about 20 percent of the Christians are Protestant, and 10 percent are Catholic. This is the highest Christian percentage of any Asian country. Over half of the population makes no claims or professions of faith in any organized religion. Before 1948,

Pyongyang was an important Christian center. At that time, approximately three hundred thousand people identified as Christian. After establishing a Communist government in North Korea, many Christians fled to South Korea to avoid persecution.

Potential Korean Peninsula War



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Unification of North and South

What if North Korea and South Korea became unified again? In geography, there is a concept of regional complementarity, which exists when two separate regions possess qualities that would complement each if unified into one unit. North and South Korea are the classic illustrations of regional complementarity. The North is mountainous and has access to minerals, coal, iron ore, and nitrates (fertilizers) needed in the South for industrialization and food production. The South has the most farmland and can produce plentiful rice harvests and other food crops. The South has industrial technology and capital needed for development in the North. If and when these two countries are reunited, they could work well as an economic unit.



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The harder question is how and under what circumstances the two Koreas could ever come to terms with unification. What about the thirty-five to forty thousand US soldiers along the DMZ? What type of government would a unified Korea have? Many young people in South Korea would like to see the US military leave Korea and the two sides united. Yet, the generation of soldiers that survived the Korean War in the 1950s understands the bitterness and difficulties caused by the division. This population segment is highly supportive of maintaining the US military's presence on the border with North Korea. Unification will not occur until this generation either passes away or comes to terms with unification. The brutal dictatorship of Kim Jong Il, with his claimed nuclear capabilities, has been the main barrier to unification. This is a political division, not technically a cultural division, even though the societies are quite different. The geography of this situation is similar to that of East and West Germany after World War II and during the Cold War. Korea may have different qualities from Germany, but unification may be

possible under certain conditions, the foremost being different leadership in the north.



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2.8 SUMMARY

East Asia is anchored by Communist China, a large country that dominates the physical region. High mountains on its western borders have isolated China. The peripheral regions of Tibet, Western China, Mongolia, and Manchuria act as buffer states that protect the core Han Chinese heartland in China Proper, where most of the population lives.

To boost foreign trade and increase its manufacturing sector, China has established special economic zones (SEZs) along its coast in hopes of attracting international businesses. Shenzhen is one such SEZ, which is located across the border from Hong Kong. Urbanization and industrialization have prompted a major rural-to-urban shift in the population.

The world-class port and strategic geographic location of Hong Kong have played a large role in its development as an economic tiger. High-tech manufacturing with banking and financial services have catapulted the small area into a major market center for Asia. In 1998, Hong Kong was united with China, opening the door for massive trade and development with China and Shenzhen.

Taiwan is a small island off the southeast coast of China. It has developed into an economic tiger with high-tech manufacturing and high incomes. The island has a separate

government from mainland China and has a capitalist economy. There has been historic tension between Taiwan and Beijing ever since the Nationalists moved here in 1948. Economic trade between Taiwan and mainland China has brought the two sides closer together.

Japan is made up of a number of large islands. After its defeat in World War II, Japan worked to recover and become a core manufacturing country and the second-largest economy in the world, although that title is now held by China. Japan has a homogeneous society in which about 99 percent of the population is Japanese. Family size is low and the population has begun to decline in numbers, causing an economic concern about the lack of entry-level workers.

Korea is split between an authoritarian-controlled North Korea and a capitalist South Korea. North Korea is isolated with a weak economy. Its citizens are denied basic human rights. South Korea has developed into one of the economic tigers of Asia. South Korea has a strong manufacturing sector that produces high-tech electronics and information technology. Thousands of Korean and US soldiers remain stationed on the demilitarized zone (DMZ) between the two Koreas.

2.9 ATTRIBUTIONS AND REFERENCES

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PART III

SOUTH ASIA

3.1 IDENTIFYING THE BOUNDARIES

Of the world's seven continents, Asia is the largest. Its physical landscapes, political units, and ethnic groups are both wide-ranging and many. South Asia extends south from the central part of the continent to the Indian Ocean. The principal boundaries of South Asia are the Indian Ocean, the Himalayas, and Afghanistan. The Arabian Sea borders Pakistan and India to the west, and the Bay of Bengal borders India and Bangladesh to the east. The western boundary is the desert region where Pakistan shares a border with Iran.



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The realm was the birthplace of two of the world's great religions, **Hinduism** and **Buddhism**, but significant Muslim populations and large groups of followers of various other religions exist. Hinduism, **Islam**, and Buddhism are the top

three religions of South Asia. While Pakistan and Iran are Islamic republics, each represents a significant branch of that faith; Iran is predominantly **Shia**, and Pakistan is mostly **Sunni**. Religious differences are also evident on the eastern border of the realm, where Bangladesh and India share a border with Myanmar. Bangladesh is mainly Muslim, while most in India align themselves with Hinduism. In Myanmar, most follow Buddhist traditions. Also, Sikhism is the dominant religion in the Punjab region, located on India's northern border with Pakistan.

The countries of South Asia include Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, and the Maldives. The **Himalayas**, separating South Asia from East Asia along the border of China's autonomous region of Tibet, are the highest mountains in the world and the dominant physical feature of the northern rim of South Asia. Other countries that share the Himalayas include Nepal, Bhutan, India, and Pakistan. Farther north, along with the Himalayan range, the traditional region of **Kashmir** is divided between India, Pakistan, and China. On the opposite side of the Himalayas are two island countries off the coast of southern India. The first is Sri Lanka, a large tropical island off India's southeast coast, and the other is the Republic of Maldives, an archipelago (a group of islands) off the southwest coast of India. The Maldives comprises almost 1,200 islands barely rising above sea level; the highest elevation is seven feet, seven inches. Only about two hundred islands in the Maldives are inhabited.



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Balancing natural capital and population growth is and will remain a primary issue. South Asia is highly populated, with about 1.7 billion people representing many ethnic and cultural groups. The diverse population has been brought together into political units rooted in the realm's colonial past, primarily under Great Britain. British colonialism significantly impacted the realm; its long-term effects include political divisions and conflicts in places such as Kashmir and Sri Lanka.

Current globalizing forces are compelling South Asian countries to establish a trade network and institute economic policies among themselves. South Asia is not one of the three main economic core areas of the world; however, it is emerging to compete globally. Some would call India a part of the semi-periphery, which means it is not actually in the core or the periphery but displays qualities of both. All the same, India remains the dominant country of South Asia and shares either a physical or a marine boundary with all the other countries in the realm.

All countries north of Afghanistan were once part of the

former Soviet Union. During the Cold War, South Asian countries were in the shadow of the superpowers and had to engage in diplomacy to balance their relationships between the Soviet Union and the United States. Communist China, an emerging economic power, has used Tibet as a buffer state with its rival, India. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has been working to reestablish its global economy. Like India, Russia portrays the qualities of the semi-periphery. The United States has had a significant impact on the affairs of the South Asian realm, even though it is physically located on the other side of the world. The United States has been at war in neighboring Afghanistan since 2001 and has also been a significant economic trading partner with the countries of South Asia. Complicating the situation, the United States has developed an extensive trade relationship with neighboring China. Economic advancements and global trade have catapulted the countries of South Asia onto the world stage.

Chapter Updated: **February 23, 2023**

3.2 PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE REGION

South Asia's **Himalaya Mountains** are the highest in the world, soaring to over 8,800 meters (29,000 feet). These are also some of the world's youngest mountains, reflecting a region that has experienced significant physical and cultural changes throughout its history. Here, we find one of the earliest and most widespread ancient civilizations, the hearth area for several of the world's great religions, and a region with a population that will soon be the largest on Earth.



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South Asia is a distinct region in terms of its physical landscape. Formidable physical barriers separate the region from the rest of the Eurasian landmass. Much of the

impressive physical geographic features of South Asia are the result of tectonic activity. Between 40 and 50 million years ago, the Indian Plate collided with the Eurasian plate. Both the Indian Plate and the Eurasian plate were comprised of reasonably low-density material, and so when the collision occurred, the two landmasses folded like an accordion creating the mountain ranges we see today. The Indian Plate is still moving towards the Eurasian plate today and over the next 10 million years, will move an additional 1,500 km (932 mi) into Asia.



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This massive tectonic collision resulted in perhaps the most well-known physical feature in South Asia: **Mount Everest**. Everest, located in the Himalaya Mountain range on the border of Nepal and China, is the highest mountain in the world. Because the India Plate continues to collide with the Eurasian Plate, this mountain range is still tectonically active and is rising at a rate of 5 mm each year. Thus, if you are

planning on scaling Mount Everest in ten years, be prepared to climb an extra two inches.



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Although the Himalaya Mountains are well-known for having the highest peak, the Karakoram Mountain range, passing through Pakistan, India, China, and Afghanistan, has the highest concentration of peaks above 8,000 meters (26,000 feet). Its highest peak, K2, is the second-highest mountain in the world, and far fewer people have successfully made it to the top compared to Everest. One in four people dies while attempting to summit.

Another key physical feature of South Asia, the **Deccan Plateau**, was formed from the region's tectonic activity. Around 65 million years ago, there was an enormous fissure in Earth's crust, which led to a massive eruption of lava. The entire Indian peninsula was buried in several thousand feet of basalt, a type of dense, volcanic rock.



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Major River Systems

South Asia's rivers, including the **Indus**, **Ganges**, and **Brahmaputra**, form a lowland region that was home to several ancient civilizations. These rivers provide for the water needs of many of this region's people, irrigation for agricultural lands, and an abundance of fish. However, these rivers have had significant environmental concerns in recent years and have supported increasing numbers of people along their banks. Most of the area along the Ganges River has been converted into urban or agricultural land, and wild species like elephants and tigers that used to be present along the river are now gone. Pollution in the Ganges River has reached unprecedented levels as industrial waste and sewage is dumped untreated into the river even though people frequently use the water for bathing, washing, and cooking. It is estimated that around 80 percent of all illnesses in India result from water-borne diseases. The World Bank has loaned

India over \$1 billion to clean up the river, but experts believe that larger-scale infrastructure improvements are needed to improve the region's quality of water. (Finlayson, 2019)



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India's Monsoon

The most important climatic feature of South Asia is the monsoon's dramatic weather cycle. The **monsoon** refers to seasonal shifts in the wind that result in changes in precipitation. From October to April, winds typically come from the northeast in South Asia, creating dry conditions. Beginning in April, however, winds shift to the southwest, picking up moisture over the Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean, and the Bay of Bengal.



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Most of the rain during the monsoon season results from orographic precipitation, which caused physical barriers to form air masses to climb, where they cool, condense, and form precipitation. India's Western Ghats, a mountain range on its western coast, causes **orographic precipitation** on its windward side. The Himalaya Mountains similarly result in orographic precipitation. However, these critical highland areas are so formidable that they cause a dry area on their leeward side, known as a rain shadow. On one side of the Himalayas are some of the wettest places on Earth, with over 30 feet of rain each year. On the other side, the rain shadow from the mountains forms the arid **Gobi Desert** and **Tibetan Plateau**.



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The monsoon rains, though extreme, provide significant benefits for South Asia's agriculture and economy. India gets more than 80 percent of its yearly rainfall from the monsoon, and the rains are essential for both subsistence and commercial agriculture in the region. A good monsoon year will replenish the region's water supplies and increase crop yields, driving down food prices. Ample rainfall also contributes to the region's hydroelectricity potential. However, the torrential rains of the monsoon can also cause widespread flooding, destroying agricultural lands and transportation infrastructure, and can contribute to water-borne and insect-borne illnesses due to the significant amounts of standing water.

The monsoon is changing, however. Global changes in climate have made the monsoon harder to predict. Also, rising numbers of automobiles across South Asia have increased air pollution, which can interfere with the monsoon's mechanics. In the past, once the monsoon season starts, rains continue throughout the season. Recently, though, the monsoon rains have begun to stop and start throughout the rainy season. People in this region are generally unprepared for an

unpredictable or variable monsoon season and rely heavily on the rains for agriculture. Local leaders are pushing for more research to understand the shifting monsoon rains better and for increased education on water conservation and sustainable agricultural management. (Finlayson, 2019)



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3.3 HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE REGION

Human Settlement Patterns

South Asia's rich cultural landscape is a product of its varied physical environment and a long history of human settlement. Modern humans first settled in this area 75,000 years ago, and early human ancestors likely settled in the region hundreds of thousands of years before that. The first major civilization in South Asia was in the Indus River valley, beginning around 3300 BCE. This civilization, located in present-day Pakistan, Afghanistan, and northwestern India, relied on the monsoon rains to provide water to the Indus River. Here, early settlers developed systems of urban planning, baked brick houses, and the civilization at its peak numbered over five million people.

By 1800 BCE, however, the Indus Valley civilization began to decline. Weakened monsoon rains likely led to drought conditions, and even small changes in precipitation and climate can have a devastating effect on a population of five million. Although residents developed some water supply systems, they depended mostly on the monsoon rains for

agriculture, and many began moving to other areas of the region as arid conditions increased.



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Around 1500 BCE, the Aryans, an Indo-Iranian group from modern-day Iran, invaded northern India. The Aryans were speakers of Indo-Iranian languages and brought their language, known as Sanskrit, their culture, and their ideas of social order to the South Asian realm. Hinduism and the caste system would both emerge from the Aryan culture.

(Finlayson, 2019)

South Asia was conquered by several different empires, each leaving an impact on the cultural landscape. The Maurya Empire, followed by several different dynasties, stretched across the Himalaya and Karakoram mountain ranges, extending into most of South Asia by 250 BCE. In the middle ages, the Islamic Empire extended into Afghanistan and Pakistan.



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In the 18th century, however, the ruling Islamic Mughal Empire was in decline, leaving a power vacuum that would be exploited by the British. As the Industrial Revolution swept through the United Kingdom, the British were interested in expanding their supply of natural resources. Throughout the mid-18th century and the early 19th century, the British Empire, which had established the British **East India Company**, took over vast stretches of land in India. The British established tea and cotton plantations and took control of South Asia's resources. Although this region had previously established successful trading systems, the British saw local industries as competition and shifted their development to export raw materials. British rule also increased Westernization in South Asia and created an extensive rail transportation system.





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As time went on, there were rising demands for independence. **Mohandas K. Gandhi**, known in India by the title “Mahatma,” was a London-educated lawyer and a leader in India’s struggle for independence. He organized local communities to participate in nonviolent protests, and his commitment to nonviolent resistance would inspire later civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. (Finlayson, 2019)



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Throughout this time, the isolated Himalayan countries of Nepal and Bhutan primarily existed as buffer states, caught between the powerful British Empire and China. Their

relative isolation allowed them to develop unique cultural features with little influence from outside groups, but as with most buffer states, leaving them with less economic and industrial development than their more powerful neighbors.

The British eventually agreed to withdraw from India, but political and religious differences resulted in a partition of the former British territory in 1947. Areas that were majority Hindu would become the secular state of India. Areas that were majority Muslim would become the new Islamic state of Pakistan. Since Muslims were clustered both in modern-day Pakistan and along the mouth of the Ganges on the coastal Bay of Bengal, the Muslim state of Pakistan would be divided into a Western and an Eastern territory. This prompted large-scale migrations of Hindus and Muslims who were on the “wrong” side at the time of the partition.

Not everyone in South Asia supported the partition plan. Gandhi, who had long called for religious unity in the region, was opposed to the concept and hundreds of thousands of people were killed in violent riots. In 1948, Gandhi was assassinated by a Hindu nationalist who opposed the partition plan and Gandhi’s commitment to nonviolence. (Finlayson, 2019)



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Although there were areas that were majority Hindu or Muslim, religious minorities existed throughout India, and not all regions had a smooth transition. At the time of the partition, states were free to decide whether they wanted to join Hindu India or Muslim Pakistan. In the territory of Jammu and Kashmir in Northern India, Muslims comprised around 75 percent of the population, but the maharaja, the Sanskrit term for “great ruler,” was Hindu. The maharaja struggled with the decision, and in the meantime, backed by Pakistan, Muslim rebels invaded. He then gave the territory to India in exchange for military aid.

Today, Jammu and Kashmir remain a hostile territory, and there have been violent clashes in the past few decades over political control. In the 1950s, China, without the knowledge of India, built a road through the northern portion of the state and was given territory by Pakistan. Although India claims the entire state controls the southern half of the state and about four-fifths of its population. Pakistan controlled the territory’s northern portion and moved its capital from Karachi to Islamabad to better control its frontiers. East Pakistan, long marginalized and culturally discriminated

against by West Pakistan, gained independence as the state of Bangladesh in 1971.

As a region, South Asia is now the most populous area in the world and is home to over 1.9 billion people. Some of the world's largest megacities are located here as well, including Delhi, India (population of 26 million in the entire metropolitan area), Karachi, Pakistan (population of 14 million, with some estimating that it is much higher) and Mumbai, India (population of over 21 million). Despite the sizeable population, however, the region remains mostly rural. Only around 36 percent of people in Pakistan, 31 percent of people in India, and 28 percent of people in Bangladesh live in cities. These relatively low levels of urbanization indicate that most people in the region still practice agriculture. (Finlayson, 2019)

Urbanization is increasing, however, as industrialization and development have brought new jobs to the cities. British colonization left the region with the English language, which has proven an economic asset, though it has also led to the marginalization of indigenous languages. Foreign companies have increasingly outsourced to India, taking advantage of a large, low-wage, and English-speaking labor pool. Outsourcing refers to contracting out a portion of a business to another party, which might be located in a different country. Business processing, particularly call centers and information technology has been outsourced and employs significant numbers of people in India. India is also one of the

global leaders in fiber production, and textile production remains an integral part of Pakistan's and Bangladesh's economies.

Nepal and Bhutan remain isolated both in terms of physical geography and global economic integration. Political uncertainty has generally hampered Nepal's economic growth, but the country has been able to reduce its poverty rate considerably in recent decades. Due to climbers' flocking to Mount Everest, tourism to Nepal has also increased, though local leaders have expressed concern over mounting trash and pollution issues. In the early 21st century, Bhutan transitioned from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy and held its first general election. Its government has promoted the measure of gross national happiness (GNH), as opposed to relying strictly on measures of economic or industrial development and has sought sustainable ways to develop and urbanize. (Finlayson, 2019)

Cultural Groups

South Asia is a diverse region in terms of its ethnic landscape, culture, and religious beliefs. In the northern portion of the region, the Indo-European languages, like Hindi, dominate the Aryan invasion. Along the Himalayas, languages in the **Sino-Tibetan family** dominate. In southern India, however, most groups speak a language in the **Dravidian family**,

comprised of the indigenous languages of South Asia that were present before the arrival of the Aryans. These language families reflect broader differences in culture and ethnicity, including particular religious practices and food customs. Thus the label “Indian cuisine” actually encompasses a diverse array of regional and traditional specialties.

South Asia is a hearth area for several of the world’s great religions. Out of the Aryan invasion of northern India came a religious belief system known as **Vedism**. The religious texts of Vedism, known as the **Vedas**, combined with local religious beliefs, developed into the modern-day religion of Hinduism by around 500 BCE. **Hinduism** is a polytheistic religion with a wide variety of individual beliefs and practices. Hinduism is a highly regional and individual religion, and its polytheistic nature reflects this extensive understanding of belief. Of Hinduism’s over 1 billion followers, 95 percent live in India.



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At its heart, there are four key features of Hinduism: dharma, karma, reincarnation, and worship. **Dharma** refers to the laws

and duties of being and is different for every person. You might be a student and an employee and a child and a sibling. All of those roles have prescribed responsibilities. To be a good student, for example, means to attend class, read the textbook, and study. In Hindu culture, there are also restraints and observances for how you interact with other people depending on their status. (Finlayson, 2019)



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Hindu views on the afterlife are quite different from the Judeo-Christian conception of heaven. Hindus believe in **karma**, which means that your deeds, good or bad, will return to you. They also believe in **reincarnation**, which is the idea that once you die, your spirit is reborn. Thus, you are the sum of many past existences. Karma, dharma, and reincarnation go hand in hand. If someone had done good deeds, had good intentions, and lived virtuously, when they die and are reincarnated, they might come back as something great – a prince, perhaps. Conversely, if someone was a terrible person, accumulating an excess of negative karma when they are

reincarnated, they might come back as someone of deficient status – or maybe not even a person at all.



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Hindu scripture discusses four distinct castes or groups, of people in society, an example of **social stratification**. This social hierarchy is known as the **caste system**. The Brahmins, the highest caste, consist of priests and teachers and represent around 3 percent of India's total population. There is a warrior caste, a merchant caste, and finally the lowest, the laborer caste of landless serfs. Excluded from this caste system and viewed as so below it that they are not even a part of it, are the “untouchables,” also known as “Dalit,” meaning “oppressed.” The untouchables are so-named because they perform work that makes them spiritually unclean, such as handling corpses, tanning hides, or cleaning bathrooms. Traditionally, higher castes would get ritually purified if they touch a Dalit. Many untouchables are indigenous, non-Aryan Indians.



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Because of the content and age-restricted conditions, you will need to log into YouTube to watch the video.

So how might the belief in karma and reincarnation affect social justice in South Asia? Although the Indian constitution outlawed the caste system, widespread discrimination and persecution persist. Many Hindus believe that those in lower castes were reborn into that social status because they had committed misdeeds in their past life. However, other Hindus fought against the caste system and have worked to integrate the Dalits into Indian society more. (Finlayson, 2019)

Buddhism emerged out of Hinduism in northern India following the life and teachings of Hindu prince Siddhartha Gautama. According to Buddhist belief, Siddhartha lived a life of luxury but became disenchanted with his life of

privilege when faced with society's injustices, such as illness and extreme poverty. Since Hinduism offered no evident cessation of what Siddhartha viewed as an endless cycle of suffering through samsara, the soul's continual death, and rebirth, he sought out new ways of ending suffering. For a time, Siddhartha practiced meditation and extreme asceticism, eating only dirt and bits of rice. However, neither the path of luxury nor the complete absence of worldly pleasures gave him the insight he sought. Eventually, in meditation under a Bodhi tree in Bodh Gaya, India, Siddhartha discovered what Buddhists refer to as the Middle Way, a path of moderation. He is said to have achieved enlightenment and is known as the first Buddha, meaning "awakened one."



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Although Buddhism, like Hinduism, is a highly regional religion with many different forms of individual expression, Buddhists generally share a belief in the **Four Noble Truths**:

1. Suffering is universal and inevitable.

2. The immediate cause of suffering is desire and ignorance.
3. There is a way to dispel ignorance and relieve suffering.
4. The eightfold path is the means to achieve liberation from suffering.

In order to obtain enlightenment, the Buddha recommended the **Eightfold Path**. In Buddhism, “right” does not refer to the western-logic of right and wrong. Rather, “right” is more in line with terms such as *wise* or *ideal*.

- **Right view of understanding:** insight into the true nature of reality
- **Right intention:** unselfish desire to realize enlightenment
- **Right speech:** using speech compassionately and without lies
- **Right action:** using ethical conduct to manifest compassion
- **Right livelihood:** making a living through ethical and nonharmful means
- **Right effort:** cultivate wholesome qualities and releasing unwholesome qualities
- **Right mindfulness:** whole body-mind awareness
- **Right concentration:** meditation or dedicated, concentrated practice

Buddhists also share with Hindus a common belief in karma,

dharma, and reincarnation. Buddhism diffused across Asia, though never taking a stronghold in India. The Maurya Emperor Ashoka, in particular, was responsible for the widespread diffusion of Buddhism in the 3rd century BCE. The religion has three primary branches, each with a distinct regional concentration. The oldest branch, Theravada, is primarily practiced in Southeast Asia, in places like Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand and is also the majority religion on the South Asian island of Sri Lanka. Mahayana is practiced by most Buddhists worldwide, particularly in places like China and Japan. Vajrayana Buddhism, which is sometimes considered a subset of Mahayana Buddhism, is practiced in the Himalayas and Tibetan Buddhism is a notable example. Buddhism has around 500 million followers worldwide. (Finlayson, 2019)

Although Buddhism and Hinduism are the most widely practiced, South Asia was also a hearth area for the Jain and Sikh religions. **Jainism** emerged in India in the first century BCE and emphasized ahimsa, nonviolence toward all living beings. Even insects found in the home are gently ushered out rather than killed. Jains also seek to break free from attachments and inner passions and aim to keep an open mind toward different perspectives. The teachings of Jainism were influential for Gandhi and his emphasis on nonviolent resistance.

Sikhism emerged in the Punjab region of northwestern India and northern Pakistan in the 15th century. It is a

monotheistic religion founded on the teachings of Guru Nanak that combine elements of both Hinduism and Islam. Like Hindus, Sikhs believe in reincarnation and karma. However, unlike Hinduism, Sikhism prohibits the worship of idols, images, or icons. Sikhs believe God has 99 names, an adaptation of Hindu polytheistic belief. Sri Harmandir Sahib, commonly called the “Golden Temple,” in Amritsar, India, is the holiest Sikh temple, which is called a **gurdwara**. However, the building is open to everyone, and every visitor is offered a free meal. Over 100,000 people visit the site every day.

These religions, along with other minority religions like Christianity and indigenous belief systems, have not always coexisted peacefully in South Asia. Although India is officially secular, having no official religion, regional religious conflicts have often occurred throughout history. The difficulty is that in this region, very few people are secular, with no attachment to religion. Governments have thus struggled to find ways of accommodating minority religious groups while not offending the majority. (Finlayson, 2019)

Population Dynamics

South Asia is the most populous region on Earth, but why is it the most populous, and how do geographers study population? The simplest way to measure population is to count the number of people in an area. India, for example, has

a population of over 1.3 billion, making it the second-most populous country after China. But do raw numbers of people tell the whole story of the human population in an area? If two countries have the same population, but one is far smaller than the other, how could we examine the population to explore this difference?



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Geographers often use the concept of density to investigate the population. **Arithmetic density** is relatively easy to calculate. It is determined by only taking the number of people in an area divided by the size of the area. If a territory were one-kilometer square, for example, and were home to 100 people, the arithmetic density would be 100 people per square kilometer. Although arithmetic density is easy to calculate, it gives us a relatively limited view of population density. What if there are two tracts of land that are the same size and have the same number of people, but one is lush and fertile and has people spread out evenly, and the other has a tiny river that everyone lives near? If you were using

arithmetic density, the measurements for these two areas would be the same even though the actual settlement patterns are quite different. **Physiologic density** takes into account this difference by examining the number of people per unit of arable or farmable land.



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Arithmetic and physiologic density can give us insight into the country's concentration and allow us to make comparisons between countries. The United States, a relatively large country, for example, has an arithmetic density of 32 people per square kilometer. However, a relatively small percentage of US land is arable, so the physiologic density is 179 people per square kilometer. Bhutan, by comparison, has a low population density of only 14 people per square kilometer. However, its rugged mountain environment means that only around 2 percent of the land is farmable, so its physiologic density is 606 people per square kilometer. By most measures, the most densely populated area in the world is Singapore, with an arithmetic density of 6,483 people per

square kilometer and a physiologic density of 441,000 per square kilometer. (Finlayson, 2019)

Another way to measure population is **agricultural density**, which is the ratio of the number of farmers to the land. In developing countries where many people work as farmers, agricultural density is very high. South Asia has a high agricultural density. In developed countries, commercial agriculture and technological innovations have allowed relatively few people to be farmers, and agricultural densities are generally low.

Geographers can also examine how a population is growing and changing over time. One way to explore this is with a **population pyramid**, a graphical representation of a population's age groups and composition of males and females. Ages of people are grouped in cohorts with younger people on the bottom and older on the top. Thus, a very triangular population pyramid has a lot of young people growing rapidly.

Typically, the ratio of males to females, known as the **sex ratio**, is 1 to 1, and population pyramids will have even sides. However, in populations where males are favored, the ratio may be skewed. Similarly, in countries where men have died in war, such as in World War II Germany, there might be more females. When geographers and population demographers refer to sex, it means something different from gender; sex is a person's biological identity as male or female, while gender

refers to a person's role as a "man" or "woman" within society.

India's 2017 population pyramid reveals rapid population growth over the past few decades. However, the leveling off at the base of the pyramid indicates that population growth may be slowing. Also, India's cultural preference for male children is apparent. Among children aged zero to four, India has 62 million males and only 55 million females. Nationwide, there are over 47 million more males in India than females. Both abortion and infanticide have contributed to this imbalance.

All of the population pyramids for the countries in this region reveal preferences for male children, though none are as severe an imbalance as India. Although Pakistan's population growth has slowed in the past decades, its fertility rate remains the highest in the region at around 3.5, meaning a woman in Pakistan, on average, will have 3.5 children. (Finlayson, 2019)

Challenges and Opportunities

India's male-skewed population pyramid is indicative of a more significant issue of gender inequality in its society. Sexual violence, in particular, continues to be a significant issue. Although the percentage of women who have been raped in India is lower than in other countries, most rape cases

are never reported. Even an incidence rate of 8 or 9 percent in a population of over 1 billion people means that tens of millions of women have been victimized. The government of India has taken steps to reform its criminal code so that more criminals are prosecuted, but after a 2013 reform, marital rape continues not to be a crime. In a country with few female police officers, high rates of domestic violence, and a relatively low status of women, sexual violence will likely remain a problem until these broader, systemic issues are addressed.



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Overall, South Asia's growing population will have a significant impact on its geography. Much of the historical growth in this region was supported by the **Green Revolution**, which refers to changes in agricultural technology and productivity beginning in India in the 1960s. In 1961, India was at risk of widespread famine when a developed hybrid rice seed yielded ten times more rice than traditional seeds. It was called "Miracle Rice," and its use spread throughout Asia. Despite these agricultural advances,

South Asia has the highest rates of child malnutrition in any world region. The low status of women contributes to a lack of knowledge about the nutrients needed for children.

Around one in three children in India are underweight.

Economically, South Asia has experienced rising prosperity, yet systemic issues of governance and poverty remain. India, in particular, has one of the world's largest economies and the fastest growing economy in the region. This economic growth has mainly focused on urban centers, drawing large numbers of people from the rural countryside to the cities to find work. Many cities have been unable to accommodate the rapid migration, however, and the sprawling slums in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh are indicative of inadequate infrastructure and economic inequality. Several factories in this region have collapsed in recent years, killing thousands of workers and highlighting the poor working condition of many South Asians. (Finlayson, 2019)

What does the future hold for South Asia? Although economic growth has reduced poverty in India, down from 60 percent in 1981 to 25 percent in 2011, corruption has increased. Inequality between genders, religious groups, castes, and ethnic groups remains a problem in much of the region. In some cases, this has led to **communal conflict**, which refers to violence between members of different communities. In Sri Lanka, a majority Buddhist country, ethnicity and religion are closely linked. Buddhists here have shaken the traditional peaceful image of their religion and

have engaged in violent conflict with the minority Tamils and Muslims.

Still, local government and community leaders have sought to escape the shadow of the 20th century's turmoil by embracing new models of development and cooperation. For example, in Bhutan, the government initiative to measure gross national happiness resulted in shifting urban amenities, such as schools and healthcare clinics, to rural areas. This slowed the rural to urban migration that was rapidly occurring in other parts of the realm. Despite political and military turmoil, Pakistan has been able to decrease its poverty rate substantially. South Asia remains a complex realm at the crossroads of modernization and traditional cultural and religious values. (Finlayson, 2019)



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3.4 INDIA

India and Colonialism

India is considered the world's largest democracy. The complexities of this Hindu state surface as the historical geography and the development patterns of India are examined. European colonizers of South Asia included the Dutch, Portuguese, French, and, finally, the British. In search of raw materials, cheap labor, and expanding markets, Europeans used their technological advancements to dominate the regional industrial base. The **East India Company** was a base of British operations in South Asia and evolved to become the region's central government by 1857. The British government created an administrative structure to govern South Asia. Their centralized government in India employed many Sikhs in positions of the administration to help rule over the mostly Muslim and Hindu population. The English language was introduced as a lingua franca for the colonies.

In truth, colonialism did more than establish the current boundaries of South Asia. Besides bringing the region under one central government and providing a lingua franca, India's colonizers developed the main port cities of **Bombay**,

Calcutta, and **Madras** (now called **Mumbai**, **Kolkata**, and **Chennai**, respectively). The names of the port cities have been reverted to their original Hindi forms). The port cities were access points for connecting goods with markets between India and Europe. Mumbai became the largest city and the economic center of India. In 1912, to exploit the interior of India, the British moved their colonial capital from Kolkata, the port for the densely populated Ganges River basin, to **New Delhi**. Chennai was a port access to southern India and the core of the Dravidian ethnic south.

Britain exploited India by extending railroad lines from the three main port cities into the hinterlands, to transport materials from the interior to the port for export. The Indian Railroad is one of the largest rail networks on Earth. The problem with colonial railroads was that they did not necessarily connect cities with other cities. The British colonizers connected rail lines between the hinterland and the ports for resource exploitation and commercial goods export. Today, the same port cities act as focal points for the import/export activity of globalization and remain core industrial centers for South Asia. They are now well connected with the other cities of India.



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Goa is the smallest state of modern-day India. In the sixteenth century, it was first encountered by Portuguese traders, who annexed it shortly after that to become a colony of Portugal, which it was for the next 450 years. Goa was one of the longest-held colonial possessions in the world and was not annexed by India until 1961. By the mid-1800s, most of the population of this tiny area had been forcibly converted to Christianity. Although many Hindu traditions survived the colonial period, and Hindu holidays are celebrated here, Goa is known for its Christian holiday celebrations, especially Christmas and Easter. The cathedral and secular architecture in many of the historic buildings of Goa are European in style, reflecting its Portuguese origins.

The People of India

Contrasts in India are explicitly evident in the regional differences of its human geography. The north-south contrasts are apparent through the lingua franca and ethnic divisions. The main lingua franca in the north is Hindi. In the

Dravidian-dominated south, the main lingua franca is English. The densely populated core region along the Ganges River, anchored on each end by Delhi/New Delhi and Kolkata, has traditionally been called the heartland of India. The south is anchored by the port city of Chennai and the large city of Bangalore. Chennai has been a traditional industrial center. The industrial infrastructure has shifted to more modern facilities in other cities, giving over to a “rustbelt” syndrome for portions of the Chennai region. India is a dynamic country, with shifts and changes continually occurring. Any attempt to stereotype India into cultural regions would be problematic.

In 2010, India had more than 1.18 billion people, which is about one-sixth of the human population of the earth. An 80 percent majority follow Hindu beliefs. About 13 percent of the population is Muslim. Thirteen may not seem like a high percentage, but in this case, it equates to about 140 million people. This is equivalent to all the Muslims who reside in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Egypt. India is sometimes called the third-largest Muslim country in the world, after Indonesia and Pakistan, because of its significant Muslim minority. India essentially has two lingua francas: English and Hindi, of which Hindi is the official language of the Indian government. India has twenty-eight states, and four-teen recognized significant languages. Many different languages are spoken in rural areas. The languages of northern India are mainly based on the **Indo-European** language family.

Languages used in the south are mainly from the **Dravidian** language family. A few regions that border Tibet in the north use languages from the **Sino-Tibetan** language family.



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Urban versus Rural

Rural and urban life within the Indian subcontinent varies according to wealth and opportunity. While concentrated in specific areas across the landscape, in general, the population in rural areas is discontinuous and spread thinly. In urban areas, the populations are very concentrated, with many times the population density found in rural areas. India has six world-class cities: Kolkata, Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore, and Hyderabad. There are many other large cities in India; in 2010, India had forty-three cities with more than a million people each.

India's interior is mainly composed of villages. In rural villages, much of the economy is based on subsistence

strategies, primarily agriculture and small cottage industries. The lifestyle is focused on the agricultural cycles of soil preparation, sowing, and harvesting as well as tending animals, particularly water buffalo, cattle, goats, and sheep. About 65 percent of the population lives in rural areas and makes a living in agriculture. About 35 percent of the population—which is equal to the entire US population, is urbanized. India is rapidly progressing toward urbanization and industrialization. Changes in technology, however, tend to be slow in dispersing to the rural villages. More than half the villages in India do not have road access for motor vehicles. For residents of those villages, walking, animal carts, and trains are the main methods of transportation. Agricultural technology is primitive. The diffusion of new ideas, products, or methods can be slow. Modern communication technology is, however, helping connect these remote regions.

India's cities are dynamic places, with millions of people, cars, buses, and trucks all found in the streets. In many areas of urban centers, traffic may be stopped to await the movement of a sacred cow or a donkey or bullock cart loaded with merchandise. Indian cities are growing at an unsustainable rate. Overcrowded and congested, the main cities are modernizing and trying to keep up with global trends. Traditionally, family size was large, resulting in a swell of young people migrating to urban areas to seek more significant opportunities and advantages. In modern times,

family size has been reduced to about three children, an accomplishment that did not come easily because of the religious beliefs of most of India's people. If current trends continue, India will overtake China as the most populous country in the world in about fifty years.

The official governmental control level is usually different in an urban setting from what it is in the rural areas. There may be more police or military personnel in areas of heavy traffic or in urban areas that need extra control. A central feature of many Indian cities is an older central city representing the protected part of the city. In Delhi, for example, New Delhi represents the new construction of government buildings that were begun during the British occupation of the region as part of the British Empire. Old Delhi represents the old markets, government buildings, palaces, fortresses, and mosques built during the Mogul Empire, between the mid-1500s and the mid-1800s. These older parts of the cities, particularly the markets, are bustling with activities, merchants, shoppers, cab drivers, and pedal and motor rickshaws. Rickshaws are either bicycle-driven cabs or cabs based on enclosed motor scooters.

In urban areas, there is a socioeconomic hierarchy of a small group of people who are wealthy and can afford all the amenities we associate with modern life—electricity, clean water, television, computers, and the like. One of the things that characterize modern Indian cities is an expanding middle class. Many young people see the kinds of material goods

available in the West and are creating job markets and opportunities to allow them to reach or maintain this type of lifestyle. One of the major markets to support this burgeoning middle class is the information technology field, as well as outsourcing in many of the cities of peninsular India.

India is a country with considerable contrast between the wealthy urban elites and the poor rural villagers, many of whom move to the cities and live in slums and work for little pay. Low labor costs have enabled Indian cities to industrialize in many ways similar to Western cities, complete with computers, Internet services, and other modern communications services. India's growing middle class is a product of educational opportunities and technological advancements. This available skilled labor base has allowed India's industrial and information sectors to take advantage of economic opportunities in the global marketplace to grow and expand their activities. Outsourcing activities augment development within India by American and European corporations to India. Service center jobs created by business process outsourcing (BPO) are in high demand by skilled Indian workers.

India's Economic Situation

In the past decade, India has possessed the second-fastest growing economy globally; China is first. India's economy

continues to expand rapidly and has a tremendous impact on the world economy. Despite the size of the economy, India's population has a low average per capita income.

Approximately one-fourth of the people living in India live in poverty; the World Bank classifies India as a low-income economy. India has followed a central economic model for most of its development since it declared independence. The central government has exerted strict control over private-sector economic development, foreign trade, and foreign investment. Various economic reforms since the 1990s have allowed India to open up these markets by reducing government control on foreign investment and trade. Many publicly owned businesses are being privatized. Globalization efforts have been vigorous in India. There has been substantial growth in information services, health care, and the industrial sector.



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The economy is extremely diverse and has focused on agriculture, handicrafts, textiles, manufacturing, some

industry, and a vast number of services. A 60 percent majority of the population earns its income directly from agriculture and agriculture-related services. Landholdings by individual farmers are small, often less than five acres. When combined with the inadequate use of modern farming technologies, small landholdings become inadequately productive and impractical. Monsoons are critical for the success of India's crops during any given season. Because the rainfall of many agricultural areas is tied to the monsoon rains of only a few months, a weak or delayed rainfall can have disastrous effects on the agricultural economy. Agricultural products include commercial crops such as coffee and spices (cardamom, pepper, chili peppers, turmeric, vanilla, cinnamon). An essential product for perfume and incense is sandalwood, which is harvested primarily in the dense forests of Karnataka in southwestern India. Bamboo is an integral part of the agricultural harvest, as well. Of course, rice and lentils provide an essential basis for the local economy.

Over the last two decades, information technology and related services are transforming India's economy and society. In turn, India is transforming the world's information technologies in terms of production and service as well as the export of skilled workers in financial, computer hardware, software engineering, and software services. Manufacturing and industry are becoming a more critical part of India's economy as it begins to expand. Manufacturing and industry account for almost one-third of the gross domestic product

(GDP) and contribute jobs to almost one-fifth of the total workforce. Major economic sectors such as manufacturing, industry, biotechnology, telecommunications, aviation, shipbuilding, and retail are exhibiting strong growth rates.

A large number of educated young people who are fluent in English are changing India into a “back office” target for global outsourcing for customer services. These customer services focus on computer-related products but also include service-related industries and online sales companies. The level of outsourcing of information activity to India has been substantial. Any work that can be conducted over the Internet or telephone can be outsourced to anywhere in the world that has high-speed communication links. Countries that are attractive to BPO are countries where the English language is prominent, where employment costs are low, and there is an adequate labor base of skilled or educated workers trained in the services required. India has been the leading destination for BPO activity from the United States. Firms with service work or computer programming are drawn to India because English is a lingua franca, and India has an adequate skilled labor base.



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Tourism has always been an essential part of India's economy and has been focused on the unique natural environments as well as historical cities, monuments, and temples found throughout the country. Of particular importance are the Mogul-period tombs, palaces, and mosques in Delhi, **Agra**, and **Jaipur**, India's "Golden Triangle" of tourism. India is a country of contrasts. Scenic beauty abounds from the Eastern and Western Ghats to the high mountains of the Himalayas. The monsoon rains provide abundant crops for densely populated regions such as the Ganges River basin.

On the other hand, places such as the Thar Desert are sparsely inhabited. There is a wide gap between the wealthy elite and the massive numbers of people who live in poverty. Mumbai has some of the largest slums in Asia, yet it is the financial capital of India, teeming with economic activity.

As incomes rise for the middle class in India, the price of automobiles becomes more accessible. On the downside, an escalation in the number of motor vehicles in use tends to lead to an escalation in the levels of air pollution and traffic congestion. Similarly, an expansion of transportation systems increases the use of fossil fuels. India is a significant

competitor for fossil fuels exported from the Persian Gulf and other Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) sources. The continued industrialization and urbanization in India foretell an increase in demand for energy. Rising energy costs and demand, combined with economic growth, have caused a severe problem for India. Many areas will be without power as they are shut off the power grid for hours or days, a process known as load-shedding. This allows industry and manufacturing to use energy resources during peak times. In general, India is poor in natural gas and oil resources and is heavily dependent on coal and foreign oil imports. India is rich in alternative energy resources, such as solar, wind, and biofuels; however, alternative energy resources have not been sufficiently developed.



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The Indian Cinema

Cinema makes up a large portion of the entertainment sector in India. India's cinema industry is often referred to as "Bollywood," a combination of Bombay and Hollywood. Technically, Bollywood is only the segment of the Indian cinema that is based out of Bombay (Mumbai), but the title is sometimes misleadingly used to refer to the entire movie industry in India. Bollywood is the leading movie maker in India and has a world-class film production center. In the past few years, India has been producing as many as one thousand films annually. The highest annual output for the US film industry is only about two-thirds that of India. According to the Guinness Book of World Records, India's city of Hyderabad has the most extensive film production center. The Telugu film industry operates the studio in Hyderabad.

Indian films are produced in more than a dozen languages and appeal to a broad domestic and international audience. Indian movies range from large epic productions with stories within stories to dramas, musicals, and theatrical presentations. Their popularity extends beyond South Asia. Indian movies with modest dress, lack of explicit sexual scenes, and a focus on drama are widespread in places such as Egypt, the Middle East, and other African countries. Movie stars are energetically promoted and enjoy celebrity in India, as is the case with the entertainment industry in the United States and Europe. The cinema is part of the cultural

experience in Indian society. Urban life in India reserves a substantial presence for the entertainment industry, particularly the Indian film industry. One of the prime artistic endeavors in urban India is movie posters depicting all the glory of the latest Bollywood movie. Most of these colorful posters are painted by hand, and they tend to be massive; some are several stories high.

India: East and West

India makes up the largest physical area of the South Asia realm. Another way of looking at the physical and human landscapes of India is to study spatial characteristics. Additionally, the economic side of the equation can be illustrated by dividing India between east and west according to economic development patterns. To do this, on a map of India, draw an imaginary line from the border with Nepal in the north, near Kanpur, to the Polk Strait border with Sri Lanka in the south. This division of India illustrates two sides of India's economic pattern: an economically progressive West India and an economically stagnant East India.

Mumbai and its surrounding industrial community anchor the progressive western side of India. Mumbai is India's economic giant, the country's leading financial markets, and has been a magnet for high-tech firms and manufacturing. Mumbai's port provides access to global markets and is solidly

connected to international trade networks. Auto manufacturing, the film industry, and computer firms all have essential centers in the large urban metropolitan areas of the west. Large industrial cities such as Bangalore and Hyderabad have established themselves as high-tech production centers, attracting international business in the computer industry and the information sector. Chemical processing has been ongoing in **Bhopal**, which is noted for an environmental disaster, a gas leak in 1984 that resulted in the deaths of as many as ten thousand people. The nation's capital is located in New Delhi, which borders the massive city of (Old) Delhi. The western half of India has been progressing along with a pattern with a positive economic outlook that views the global community outside of India as a partner in its success.

The eastern half of India has not been as prosperous as the west in its economic growth. The renowned city of Kolkata has traditionally anchored the eastern sector, but its factories have deteriorated into rustbelt status with aging and outdated heavy industries. The high-intensity labor activities of textile and domestic goods manufacturing are not as economically viable as they were in the past. The stagnant economic scene in the east is signified by the low average income levels of many of the states in the eastern region. Neighboring Bangladesh offers little in support of economic growth, and Myanmar, another neighbor to the east, has its own set of problems and lacks support for East India. The eastern half of India does not have strong partnerships with the global

economy found in the west and thus relies more on internal resources for survival.

India: North and South

There are differences in the geographic patterns between the northern and southern halves of India as well as between the eastern and western halves, depending on the criteria used to compare them. Climate patterns, for example, are more diverse in the north, with a wide range of temperatures throughout the seasons. Winter temperatures in the mountainous north are cold, and summer temperatures in the Thar Desert can be extremely high. Southern India has a more moderate range of temperatures throughout the year. The far north has high mountains, while the south has only the low-lying Eastern and Western Ghats. The north has the extensive Ganges River basin, and the south has different drainage networks based on the plateaus of the region.

Besides physical aspects, there are cultural differences between the north and south, as well. India is a complex societal mix of many ethnic groups, languages, and traditions. Spatially separating the country into vernacular regions is not conducive to agreeable results. Still, some recognizable trends have been stereotyped or commonly stated between the northern and southern parts of India. The north is portrayed as a faster-paced society, with more edge and competitiveness.

The south has been portrayed as more relaxed and less insistent.

As the section on languages illustrated, Indo-European languages are mainly spoken in the north, and Dravidian languages are predominantly spoken in the south. Hindi is more commonly the lingua franca of the north, while English is the lingua franca of the south. People in the north are of Indo-Aryan descent, while the people in the south have a Dravidian heritage. Hinduism dominates all of India, but the north has a broader diversity of religions, such as Sikhism, Buddhism, and Islam, practiced by many people. The south has a substantial Christian population along its west coast.

Food is an essential aspect of the culture of societies, and there are clear distinctions between the cuisine of the north and the south in India. Indian cooking is primarily vegetarian, emphasizing aspects of Hinduism. Many dishes, particularly in North India, contain goat, chicken, lamb, fish, and other meats. Beef is not eaten by Hindus, while Muslims do not traditionally eat pork and some species of fish. North India has more wheat-based products and less rice. Their dishes are prepared with spices and herbs, including black and chili peppers. Northern Indian food is characterized by its use of dairy products (yogurt; milk; paneer, or homemade cheeses; and ghee, or clarified butter). Onions, ghee, and spices are the common base for different types of salads or curries (gravies). Griddles are used for preparing different types of flatbreads,

such as chapattis, naan, and kulcha. Rice, lentils, and chickpeas are a staple part of the diet in North India.

Food in the southern parts of India includes more rice as a staple, and seafood (fish and prawns) is frequent along the coastal areas. Coconut oil is used as a basis for cooking. Sambar, a stew made of peas and vegetables, is an essential staple of the region as rice and idlis are a type of cake or bread made from steaming fermented black lentils. Chili peppers are also common in South Indian cooking.

Biodiversity and the Environment

Earlier sections have introduced the issues of population growth and resource depletion in South Asia. India has its share of the same environmental problems. Water pollution along the Ganges is severe and affects the largest concentration of people in India. India is the second-largest consumer of coal in the world and coal that is mainly burned to produce electricity. Burning coal adds significantly to air pollution. A rise in the number of vehicles in use, combined with few emission controls, adds to the air pollution in urban areas. Deforestation continues in many rural areas, as was noted in earlier sections about Pakistan and Bangladesh.

India has several rare animal species that need habitat if they are going to survive. A few of the larger animals include

the Indian Rhinoceros, Clouded Leopard, Indian Leopard, Snow Leopard, Asiatic Lion, Bengal Tiger, Asian Water Buffalo, Asian Elephant, Striped Hyena, and the Red Panda. Many species are endangered or threatened along with many other lesser-known organisms. The high human population growth throughout South Asia places a strain on the natural habitat of wild animals. Habitat loss caused by human development makes holding on to the vast array of biodiversity difficult.

India has instituted measures designed to preserve its biodiversity. The Indian government has created sanctuaries for threatened or endangered species. National parks were established before India declared independence and were substantially expanded in recent decades. In 1972, The Wildlife Protection Act was instituted to create critical habitat for tigers and other rare species. There are hundreds of protected wildlife areas and fifteen bio-sphere reserves in India. Four of the biospheres were created in conjunction with the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Indian government has established protected areas throughout the country, many of which are in the highland regions and the northern mountains. For example, the Gir Wildlife Sanctuary, including an area preserved for Asian Lions, is located on the Kathiawar Peninsula north of Mumbai, which juts out into the Arabian Sea. India is the only place left with Asian Lions in the wild. Tigers, elephants, rhinos, and leopards can be found in the sanctuaries. The

country has about ninety-two national parks, which are also home to rare wildlife species, and more than three hundred fifty wildlife sanctuaries of all sizes. There are about twenty-eight tiger reserves in India. The country also has many marine reserves and protected areas along its coastlines.

The efforts of the Indian government to protect the country's biodiversity constitute an admirable environmental undertaking. The government has stepped up law enforcement efforts to combat poaching, which is a significant cause of the decrease in numbers of rare species. Poachers kill animals such as tigers, leopards, elephants, and rhinos for their hides, horns, or body parts, which are sold on the black market in Asia for large sums of money. Many of the rare, threatened, or endangered species of India would not have a chance of survival without the government efforts to protect and provide for them. Balancing finding resources for rapid human population growth with wildlife management will continue to be a challenge in the years ahead for India and all countries of the planet.

Gender Inequality

3.5 PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH

Pakistan and Bangladesh are two separate and independent countries physically divided by India. Historically, this was not always the case: from 1947 to 1971, they were administered under the same government. The two countries share several attributes. They both have Muslim majorities, and both have high population densities. The countries are two of the top ten most populous countries in the world. Their populations are youthful and mainly rural; agriculture is the main economic activity in each country. The rural-to-urban shift is a significant trend affecting urban development. Infrastructure is lacking in many areas of each country. These similar factors indicate that both Pakistan and Bangladesh will face comparable challenges in providing for their large populations and protecting their natural environments.

The Muslim League was responsible for forming a united Pakistan, a predominantly Muslim state for South Asian Muslims. Pakistan was created from the former Indian territories of Sindh (Sind), northwest Frontier Provinces, West Punjab, Baluchistan, and East Bengal. Pakistan was formed with two separate physical regions, defined by religious predominance. East Bengal, on the eastern side of India, was

known as East Pakistan, while the remainder, separated by more than one thousand miles, was known as West Pakistan. The two physical units were united politically.

East and West Pakistan, administered by one government, became independent of their colonial master in 1947 when Britain was forced out. Pakistan (East and West) adopted its constitution in 1956 and became an Islamic republic. In 1970, a massive cyclone hit the coast of East Pakistan, and the central government in West Pakistan responded weakly to the devastation. The Bengali populations were angered over the government's lack of consideration for them in response to the cyclone and other matters. The Indo-Pakistan War changed the situation. In this war, East Pakistan, with the aid of the Indian military, challenged West Pakistan and declared independence to become Bangladesh in 1972. West Pakistan became the current country of Pakistan.



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Pakistan

The physical area of Pakistan is equivalent to the US states of Texas and Louisiana combined. Much of Pakistan's land area comprises either deserts or mountains. The high Himalayan ranges border Pakistan to the north. The lack of rainfall in the western part of the country restricts agricultural production in the mountain valleys and near the river basins. The Indus River flows roughly northeast/southwest along the eastern side of Pakistan, flowing into the Arabian Sea. River sediments are deposited in large areas found between river channels and oxbow lakes formed from the continually changing river channels. These "lands between the rivers" are called **doabs** and represent some of the most fertile lands in the Indian subcontinent. The Indus River flows from the northern part of the Karakoram mountains and creates a vast, fertile flood plain that comprises much of eastern Pakistan. Pakistan has traditionally been a land of farming. The Indus River Valley and Punjab are the dominant core areas where most of the people live and where population densities are remarkably high.

Approximately 64 percent of the population lives in rural areas and makes a living in agriculture. Most of the people are economically quite poor by world standards. Despite the rural nature of the population, the average family size has decreased from seven to four in recent decades. Nevertheless, the population has exploded from about 34 million in 1951 to

about 187 million as of 2011. About half of the population is under the age of twenty; 35 percent is under the age of fifteen. A lack of adequate medical care, an absence of family planning, and the low status of women have created an ever-increasing population that will have dire consequences for the future of Pakistan. Service and infrastructure to address the needs of this youthful population are not available to the necessary degree. Schools and educational opportunities for children are rarely funded at the needed levels. As of 2010, only about 50 percent of Pakistan's population was literate.

The capital of Pakistan was Karachi, a port city located on the Arabian Sea when it was under British colonialism. To establish a presence in the north, near Kashmir, the capital was moved to Islamabad in 1960. This example of a forward capital was an expression of geopolitical assertiveness by Pakistan against India. The lingua franca of the country for the business sector and the social elite continue to be English, even though Urdu is considered the national language of Pakistan and is used as a lingua franca in many areas. More than sixty languages are spoken in the country. There are as many ethnic groups in Pakistan as there are languages. The three most prominent ethnic groups are Punjabis, Pashtuns, and Sindhis.



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Regions of Pakistan

The three central physical geographic regions of Pakistan are the Indus River Basin, the Baluchistan Plateau, and the northern highlands. These physical regions are generally associated with the country's leading political provinces. The four central provinces include the **Punjab**, **Baluchistan** (Balochistan), **Sindh** (Sind), and **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa** (northwest Frontier). To the north is the disputed region of Kashmir, known as the **Northern Areas**. Each of these regions represents a different aspect of the country. The northwest Frontier has a series of **Tribal Areas** bordering Afghanistan that have been traditionally under their local control. Agents under Tribal Agencies have attempted to administer some structure and responsibility for the areas, with little success.

The Punjab

As explained previously, the Punjab is a core area of Pakistan

and has about 60 percent of Pakistan's population. The five rivers of the Punjab border India and provide the freshwater necessary to grow food to support a large population. Irrigation canals create a water management network that provides water throughout the region. The southern portion of the Punjab includes the arid conditions of the **Thar Desert**. The northern sector includes the foothills of the mountains and has cooler temperatures in the higher elevations. The Punjab is anchored by the cities of **Lahore**, **Faisalabad**, and **Multan**. Lahore is the cultural center of Pakistan and is home to the University of the Punjab and many magnificent mosques and palaces built during its early history. In the 1980s, many Punjabis migrated to Europe, the Middle East, and North America seeking employment opportunities. This diaspora of people from the Punjab provided cultural and business ties with Pakistan. For example, trade connections between Punjab and the United States are increasing. The Punjab is the most industrialized of all the provinces. Manufacturing has increased with industries producing everything from vehicles to electrical appliances to textiles. The industrialization of the Punjab is an indication of its skilled workforce and the highest literacy rate in Pakistan, at about 80 percent.

Baluchistan

Baluchistan (Balochistan) encompasses a large portion of southwest Pakistan to the west of the Indus River. The region

connects the Middle East and Iran with the rest of Asia and has a landscape consists of barren terrain, sandy deserts, and rocky surfaces. Baluchistan covers about 44 percent of the entire country and is the most significant political unit. The sparse population ekes a living out of the few mountain valleys where water can be found. Local politics provides the basic structure for society in this region. Within the Baluchistan province of Paki-stan are several coastal and interior rivers; the interior rivers flow from the Hindu Kush Mountains of Afghanistan, while most of the rivers along with the coastal deserts from west of Karachi to the Iranian border are seasonal and provide one of the few sources of freshwater in those coastal regions. Much of the coastal region is an arid desert with dunes and extensive volcanic mountainous features.

The Sindh

The Sindh (Sind) region of the southeast is anchored by Karachi, Pakistan's largest city, and an important port. The Indus River is the border on the west, and the Punjab region lies to the north. To the east of the Sindh is the border with India and the high Thar Desert. The Sindh is a region that misses out on the rains from the summer monsoon and the retreating monsoon season when the winds sweep in from the north over South Asia. The city of Hyderabad, Pakistan, is located along the Indus River, a critical food-growing area. Food crops consist of wheat and other small grains, with

cotton as a major cash crop that helps support the textile industry of the region.

The rural-to-urban shift has pushed large numbers of Sindh residents into the Karachi city to look for opportunities and employment. In previous sections, slums and shantytowns have been described and explained for cities such as Mexico City and São Paulo; Karachi has similar development patterns. The central business district has a thriving business sector that anchors the southern part of the country. The city has a large port facility on the Arabian Sea. As a city of twelve to fifteen million people, there are always problems with a lack of public services, law enforcement, or adequate infrastructure. Urban centers usually have a strong informal economy that provides a means for many of the citizens to get by but is outside the control of the city or national government. The Sindh is the second-most populous region of Pakistan, after the Punjab.

The Northwest Frontier is a broad expanse of territory extending from Baluchistan's northern edge to the Northern Areas of the former Kingdom of Kashmir. Sandwiched between the tribal areas along the Afghanistan border and the well-watered lands of the Punjab, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province is dominated by remote mountain ranges with fertile valleys. The famous Khyber Pass, a major chokepoint into Afghanistan, is located here. The frontier is a breeding ground for anti-Western culture and anti-American sentiments, mainly fueled by the US military activity in Afghanistan. The

Taliban movement that once controlled the government of Afghanistan has been active and generally more organized in this region than in Afghanistan. A push for more fundamentalist Islamic law has been a significant initiative of the local leaders. Support for education and modernization is minimal. The government of Pakistan has also stepped up its military actions in the region to counter the activities of the militant Islamic extremists.

The Tribal Areas

The northwest Frontier borders the Tribal Areas, where clans and local leaders are standard parts of the sociopolitical structure. These remote areas have seldom been fully controlled by either the colonial governments (the British) or current Pakistan. There are about seven main areas that fall under this description. Accountability for the areas has been difficult, and even when the national government stepped in to exercise authority, there was severe resistance that halted any real established interaction. These remote areas are where groups such as al-Qaeda, and the Taliban often find a haven. South and North Waziristan are two of the main areas that have been controlled by Tribal Agencies and not directly by the Pakistani government.

Northern Areas with Disputed Kashmir

Pakistan's Northern Areas include the territories that were

once part of the Kingdom of Kashmir, the boundaries of which India disputed. The region is, in other words, interconnected with the issues related to Kashmir that involve Pakistan, India, and China. There are two main political entities: the sizeable northern section bordering Afghanistan is called Gilgit-Baltistan, and the narrow section near Islamabad is called Azad Kashmir (Azad Jammu and Kashmir). The Northern Areas are highlands, bordered to the north by the towering Karakoram and Pamir mountain ranges. K2, the world's second-highest mountain, which reaches 28,250 feet, is located here. The Northern Areas are sparsely populated except for the Indus River valley. The conflicts over these territories fuel nationalistic forces in both Pakistan and India. The conflicts are as much between Islam and Hinduism as they are between political factions. The early war between India and Pakistan over the border that the British placed between them in 1947 almost seems to be reenacted in the more recent conflicts over the region of Kashmir.



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Religion and Politics in Pakistan

Today most of the people living in Pakistan are Muslim. About 85 percent of the Muslim population in Pakistan is Sunni, and about 15 percent of the Muslim population is Shia, which is consistent with the percentages of the two Islamic divisions worldwide. Islam is considered the state religion of Pakistan. The state is a federal republic with a parliamentary style of government. As an Islamic state following the Sharia laws of the Koran, it has been a challenge for Pakistan to try to balance instituting democratic reforms while staying faithful to fundamental Islamic teachings. Pakistan has held elections for government leaders, and the status of women has improved. Women have held many governmental and political positions, including the prime minister. The military has been a foundation of power for those in charge. As a result of weak economic conditions throughout the country, it has been the military that has received primary attention and is the most influential

institution within the government. In recent years, Pakistan has demonstrated its nuclear weapons capability, which established it as a significant player in regional affairs.

Pakistan has suffered from inadequate funding for public schools. As a rule, the wealthy urban elites have been the only families who could afford to send their children to college. With half the population consisting of young people, there are few opportunities to look forward to in Pakistan. Education has been supported in the form of Islamic religious schools called madrassas, which teach children the Koran and Islamic law. Much of the funding for religious schools come from outside sources such as Saudi Arabia. The result is a religious education that does not provide the skills needed for the modern world. Pakistan has worked to build schools, colleges, and universities to educate its people. The situation is that population growth has been outpacing what little budget was allocated for educational purposes.

The government of Pakistan has struggled to meet the challenge posed by the democratic structure of its constitution. The combination of a federal republic and an Islamic state creates a unique and, at times, delicate balance in administrative politics. The legislative body of Pakistan consists of a National Assembly and a Senate, and the leader of the National Assembly is the prime minister. The elected president is not only in charge of the military but is also head of state. The military establishment and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency hold significant political power in

Pakistan. The political leadership has often vacillated between military and civilian rule. Transitions between the two types of leadership have been conducted through civil unrest or political demonstrations in the streets.

Benazir Bhutto: The First Female Prime Minister of Pakistan

Women's roles in Pakistani leadership have been complicated. To understand the impact of electing the first woman prime minister in Pakistan, one has to go back to 1972. At that time, East Pakistan gained its independence and changed its name to Bangladesh. At roughly the same time, Pakistan elected President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to power. After ruling for five years, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was ousted from power and sentenced to death by General Zia, who became the next president. General Zia was the first military general also to be president. He allowed the Islamic Sharia law to be introduced into the legal system, which bolstered the influence of Islam on the military and government services. In 1988, General Zia was killed in an unexplained plane crash. The daughter of the first president—Zulfikar Ali Bhutto—was then elected as prime minister. The thirty-five-year-old Benazir Bhutto was the first female prime minister of Pakistan.

Benazir Bhutto's tenure as prime minister was short-lived. After a year and a half, the president removed her from office on accusations of corruption. She ran again in 1993 and was

re-elected to the prime minister position. Charges of corruption continued, and she was removed as prime minister a second time in 1996. Political corruption, or the accusations of such a charge, is not uncommon in Pakistan or other countries with volatile political situations. To keep from being prosecuted by her opposition, Benazir Bhutto left Pakistan in 1998 and lived in Dubai. She did not return to Pakistan until 2007, under an agreement reached with the military general who was president at the time, General Pervez Musharraf. Benazir Bhutto was given amnesty for all claims against her.

The elimination of the corruption charges against her allowed Benazir Bhutto to become a candidate for the president's office. She organized an effective campaign. Her campaign for the presidency energized the political landscape of the country. In December of 2007, her campaign was cut short. Benazir Bhutto was assassinated after departing a political rally. She was assassinated a few weeks before the polls were to open for the election. Benazir Bhutto was the leading opposition candidate. Her death rallied support against General Musharraf with continued calls for his removal from office. General Musharraf resigned from the presidency in 2008. The winner of the presidential elections that followed was none other than Benazir Bhutto's husband, Asif Ali Zardari. President Zardari blamed the Taliban for the assassination of his wife.

Environmental Issues in Pakistan

Pakistan is confronted with severe environmental issues. One of the concerns is a fault zone that runs directly through the region. Pakistan's regions are divided by the Eurasian tectonic plate and the Indian tectonic plate. Shifting tectonic plates cause earthquakes; there have been several major ones in Pakistan's recent history. For instance, an earthquake of 7.6 magnitude in 2005 in the northern region of the northwest Frontier claimed about eighty-nine thousand lives in Pakistan and a few thousand others in neighboring India and Afghanistan. About 150 aftershocks were felt the next day, many of which were over the 6.0 level on the Richter scale. This particular event in 2005 was listed as the fourteenth most devastating earthquake on record at the time. It left over three million people without a home in Pakistan alone, and more people were left homeless in neighboring areas. Hardest hit outside of Pakistan was the portion of Kashmir that is controlled by India. Many countries, including the United States, stepped up and supported the aid effort to reach people in the devastated region. Significant earthquakes that cause devastation for the large populations here are frequent along this tectonic plate boundary.



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Another environmental issue in Pakistan is water pollution. Raw sewage discharges into the rivers and streams and contaminates the drinking water for many Pakistanis. Most of the population lives in rural areas and relies on untreated natural water for their consumption. The water sources are heavily polluted, triggering disease, and health problems. The urban areas lack public waterworks to handle freshwater supplies or to dispose of sewage properly. Industrial wastes and agricultural runoff also pollute and damage water supplies. Floods and natural runoff can carry pollutants from the land or urban areas into the rivers and streams used by human communities. The net effect of all these factors is that the majority of Pakistan's population lacks safe drinking water.

In Pakistan, deforestation is another environmental problem because the demand for wood for cooking fuel and building is on the rise. Only about 2.5 percent of Pakistan is forested. In the last two decades, Pakistan has lost about one-fourth of its forest cover. The removal of forests causes widespread soil erosion during heavy rains and decreases

natural habitat for organisms and wild animals. Efforts to protect the country's biodiversity have been minimal and are complicated by the increase in population, which is expected to double in about forty-five years if population growth remains on its current trajectory. The reality is that deforestation is likely to continue in Pakistan, with little hope of a solution anytime soon.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a low-lying country associated with the types of marshy environments found in tropical areas and river deltas. The region is extremely prone to flooding, particularly during the monsoon season because of the high amount of rainfall. One of the most important rivers of Bangladesh flows southward from the Himalayas through India and into Bangladesh. While in India, this river is known as the Brahmaputra River, but it is known as the Jamuna River when it enters Bangladesh. It provides a significant waterway for this region and empties into the Bay of Bengal.



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Contributing to the immense flow of water through the country are the Ganges and the Meghna rivers, which join the Brahmaputra River near the sea. The Ganges flows through northern India and is a significant source of fresh water for a large population before it reaches Bangladesh. The Meghna is a collection of tributaries within the boundaries of Bangladesh that flows out of the eastern part of the country. The Meghna is a deep river that can reach depths of almost two thousand feet, with an average depth of more than one thousand feet. The hundreds of water channels throughout the relatively flat country provide transportation routes for boats and ships that move goods and people from place to place. There are few bridges, so land travel is restricted when rainfall is heavy.



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Population and Globalization

Imagine a country the size of the US state of Wisconsin. Now imagine half of the entire population of the United States living within its borders. Welcome to Bangladesh. With an estimated population of about 158 million in 2011 and a land area of only 55,556 square miles, it is one of the most densely populated countries on the planet. Most of the population in Bangladesh is rural, agriculturally grounded, and poor. The larger cities, such as the capital of Dhaka, have modern conveniences, complete with Internet cafes, shopping districts, and contemporary goods. The rural areas often suffer from a lack of adequate transportation, infrastructure, and public services. Poverty is prevalent; income levels average the equivalent of a few US dollars per day. Remarkably, the culture remains vibrant and active, pursuing livelihoods that seek out every opportunity or advantage available to them.

There are many ethnic groups in Bangladesh, and many languages are spoken. The official and most widely used language in Bangladesh is Bengali (Bengala), which is an Indo-Aryan language of Sanskrit origin and has its script. A

Presidential Order in 1987 made Bengali the official language for the government of Bangladesh. Bengali is also the primary language for the Indian state of West Bengal, which neighbors Bangladesh. English is used as the lingua franca among the middle and upper classes and in higher education. Many minor languages are spoken in Bangladesh and the region as a whole. Most of the population, about 90 percent, is Muslim, with all but about 3 percent Sunni. There is a sizable minority, about 9 percent, which adheres to Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, or animism. The US State Department considers Bangladesh to be a moderate Islamic democratic country.

Bangladesh suffers from a demographic dilemma. Its tropical climate, freshwater availability, and productive agricultural land have augmented a high population growth rate. The ever-increasing population is a growing concern. The government has stepped up its support for women's health, birth control, and family planning services. This is an Islamic country, but practical approaches and common-sense regarding population control have won out over Islamic fundamentalism, which has not always supported family planning. This poor and highly populated country has experienced political problems. Most of the people work in agriculture, while the remaining population is primarily concentrated in the service sector. Small business enterprises have been encouraged by the issuing of microcredit, or small loans, to assist people in using their skills to earn income.

Globalization is evident in Bangladesh. As a result of cheap labor availability, sweatshops have been implemented to manufacture clothing for export to the world markets. The country also receives financial remittances from Bangladeshis working overseas in places such as the oil-rich region of the Middle East. It is predominantly Muslim and is attracting cheap labor for its economic development projects funded by oil revenues. One example of how Bangladesh has been able to acquire materials such as steel is in the recycling of old ships. Shipping companies that have ships that are no longer viable for modern shipping have brought them to the shores of Bangladesh to be stripped down, taken apart, and recycled.

Environmental Issues

The summer monsoons are both a blessing and a curse in Bangladesh. The blessing of the monsoon rains is that they bring fresh water to grow food. The northeast part of Bangladesh receives the highest amount of rainfall, averaging about eighteen feet per year, while the western part of the country averages only about four feet per year. Most of the rain falls during the monsoon season. Bangladesh can grow abundant food crops of rice and grain in the fertile deltas of the Ganges and Brahmaputra Rivers, rivers that ultimately empty into the Bay of Bengal. About 55 percent of the land area is arable and can be used for farming, but flooding causes severe damage to cropland by eroding soil and washing away

seeds or crops. Every year, countless people die because of the flooding, which can cover as much as a third of the country. One of the worst flooding events in Bangladesh's history was experienced in 1998, when river flooding destroyed more than three hundred thousand homes and caused more than one thousand deaths, rendering more than thirty million people homeless.

Most parts of Bangladesh are fewer than forty feet above sea level, and the country is vulnerable to significant flooding according to various global warming scenarios. Half of the country could be flooded with a three-foot rise in sea level. Storm surges from cyclones killed as many as one hundred fifty thousand people in 1991. In comparison, about two thousand people died when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in 2006. The high death toll from flooding does not receive its due attention from Western news media. Environmental concerns increase with the long-term projections of climate change. If sea level rises or if storms increase, then the low-lying agricultural lands of Bangladesh would suffer even more flooding and devastation. This would decrease the food supply of a growing population.

Another environmental problem for Bangladesh is deforestation. Wood is traditionally used for cooking and construction. The needs of a larger population have caused widespread deforestation. Brick and cement have become alternative building materials, and cow dung has become a widely used cooking fuel even though it reduces the fertilizer

base for agriculture. Even so, these adaptations have not halted the deforestation problem. The remaining forests are located along the southern borders with India and Burma (Myanmar) and in the northeast sector.

Bangladeshis suffer because of widespread water pollution from naturally occurring arsenic that contaminates water wells. The pyrite bedrock underneath much of western Bangladesh has large amounts of arsenic in it. Millions of people drink groundwater contaminated with this arsenic daily. Arsenic kills people slowly by building up in their bodies, rotting their fingernails, giving them dark spots and bleeding sores. Arsenic is a slow killer and a carcinogen that increases the risk of skin cancer and tumors inside the body. Villagers in Bangladesh began being affected by these symptoms in the 1970s. In 1993, official tests indicated that up to 95 percent of the wells in one of the villages in the western region were contaminated. The widespread water contamination has also had a social cost. Reports indicate that husbands are sending their disfigured wives back to their families of origin, and some young people are remaining single. Stories are told of people who believe that the health problems are contagious or genetic and can be passed on to children, which causes dilemmas for women trying to find a husband.

Women and Banking in Bangladesh

Despite an overall languishing economy, economic success stories in this emerging country do exist. The Grameen Bank has been working to empower women in Bangladesh for many years. The bank issues microcredit to people in the form of small loans. These loans do not require collateral. Loans are often issued to impoverished people because many of them have abilities that are underutilized and can be transformed into income-earning activities. About 96 percent of these loans are to women, and the average loan is equivalent to about one hundred dollars. Women have proven to be more responsible than men in repaying loans and utilizing the money to earn wealth. The loan recovery rate in Bangladesh is higher than 98 percent (Grameen Support Group, 2011). Microcredit has energized poor women to use their skills to make and market their products to earn a living. More than five million women have taken out such loans, totaling more than five billion dollars. This program has energized local women to succeed. It has been a model for programs in other developing countries.

3.6 PERIPHERAL STATES OF SOUTH ASIA

The Indian subcontinent is an immense landmass that juts into the Indian Ocean along the southern side of Asia, between Afghanistan and Myanmar (Burma) and south of China. The Indian perimeter includes the southern countries of the Maldives and Sri Lanka, and the northern regions of the Punjab, Kashmir, Nepal, and Bhutan. This landmass has a long tectonic history formed by the collision of the Indian Tectonic Plate with the Eurasian Plate. This tectonic collision has given rise to the highest mountain chains, and ranges in the world along the northern and northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent called the **Himalayas**.

The **Karakoram Mountains** are located in northern Pakistan and Kashmir. Together with the other Himalayan Mountain ranges, they form an arc that stretches across the entire northern border of South Asia. Nepal and Bhutan are both located in the Himalayas. The Himalayan ranges have some of the highest peaks in the region, including Mount Everest (located on the border between Nepal and China) and K2 (located in Pakistan). In western Pakistan and western Afghanistan, the **Hindu Kush** mountain ranges that border this area are found. The Indus River flows from the northern

part of the Karakoram mountains and creates a vast, fertile flood plain. Along its northern area, the Indus River System has four main tributaries. Together, these rivers constitute the five rivers of the **Punjab** regions of Pakistan and India; Punjab means the “land of the five rivers” in the Punjabi language.

Punjab

Punjab is a fertile agricultural region with a high population density located on the border between India and Pakistan. Areas of Punjab lie in both India and Pakistan. Where there are ample fresh water and bountiful food production, there is usually a high population density. Punjab is the most densely populated region in Pakistan. India has a separate state called Punjab. Its river valleys are prime areas for agricultural production and contribute heavily to the provisions needed to feed the two countries.

The Punjabi people are found in the Punjab State of India and the Punjab Province of Pakistan. This sizeable cultural area was separated into two countries during Partition at the time of Indian independence and Pakistan’s creation in 1947. Most of the people in the Pun-jab speak Punjabi, an Indo-European language. In a broader context, people with Punjabi background are considered one of the main ethnic groups in South Asia. Punjabis account for about 45 percent of the population of Pakistan.

In Pakistan, the Punjabis are grouped in clans and groups that correspond with traditional occupations. Traditionally, Punjabis are farmers and warriors, and in modern times are associated with agricultural professions and military life. Punjabis in Pakistan is predominantly Muslim, although a Christian minority exists. Indian Punjabis belong to traditional groups, including many of the same groups as in Pakistan, but many more. Most of the Muslim populations of Punjab migrated to Pakistan in 1947 and, thus, most of the Indian Punjabis are Sikh with a Christian minority.

The Punjab region of Pakistan and India is the homeland of the Sikhs, people who follow a religion that is different from Islam or Hinduism. Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak Dev (1469–1538). All distinctions of caste, creed, race, or gender are rejected in this religion. In Sikhism, there is no priestly class. Every person is equally and entirely responsible for leading a moral life, which eventually leads to universal salvation. Heaven and hell are not physical places, and God is the universal cosmic spirit. Historically, traditional Sikh men wear turbans on their heads and never cut their hair or beard. Sikhism is a universal religion. A prominent Sikh landmark and spiritual center are their Golden Temple, located in the city of Amritsar in the Indian state of Punjab.

Sikhism is a system of religious philosophy and expression, known as the Gurmit or the counsel of the gurus, or the Sikh Dharma (or way of life). Sikhism comes from the Hindi and Punjabi word *sikhna*, which means “to learn.” The prevailing

belief in Sikhism is faith in the universal God. Sikhism promotes the pursuit of salvation through discipline and personal meditation on the name and message of God. However, it must be mentioned that Sikhs have a nonanthropomorphic concept of God; that is, Sikhs do not envision God as having any form or shape or mind similar to that of humans. Sikhism has become the fifth-most widely adhered to religion on Earth.

During the British colonial occupation of South Asia, Sikhs were elevated to positions of power to help the British rule over Muslim and Hindu populations. The mostly Hindu and Muslim populations often overshadow the Sikhs in the realm. Many of the Sikhs would like to have their nation-state, free from Muslim or Hindu domination, and would like to see the Punjab region become the new homeland for this nation-state, called Khalistan. They have held rallies and demonstrations to promote the creation of Khalistan. The Indian government has, however, cracked down on militant movements that support the Khalistan concept. The Khalistan movement was more popular in the 1970s and 1980s and has been scaled down in recent decades. Proponents still attempt to attract young people and foreign donations to its cause. Khalistan does not have the support of the Pakistani and Indian governments and is not likely to become a reality any time soon. Khalistan is an example of the devolutionary push for a nation-state political unit for a particular group of people with similar aspirations or heritage.

The Kingdom of Kashmir

Located in the high mountains of the north is the former Kingdom of Kashmir, a separate kingdom before the British divided South Asia. In 1947, when the British drew the boundary between India and Pakistan, the Kashmir leader, the maharajah, chose not to be a part of either country but to remain independent. About 75 percent of the population in Kashmir was Muslim; the rest, including the maharajah, were mainly Hindu. This arrangement worked for a time until the Muslim majority was encouraged by their fellow Muslims in Pakistan to join Pakistan. After a Muslim uprising, the maharajah asked the Indian military for assistance. India was more than pleased to oblige and saw it as an opportunity to oppose Pakistan. Today Kashmir is divided, with Pakistan controlling the northern region, India controlling the southern region, and China controlling a portion of the eastern region. A cease-fire has been implemented, but outbreaks of fighting have occurred. The future of Kashmir is unclear. None of the countries involved want to start a large-scale war, because they all have nuclear weapons.



Pakistan controls the northern areas, India controls Jammu and Kashmir, and China controls the eastern portion, labeled Aksai Chin on this map. All three countries have nuclear weapons, and it seems apparent that none of the countries want to start a nuclear war.

The conflict in Kashmir is about strategic location and control of water rather than labor and resources. It is unknown whether there are abundant minerals in the mountains in Kashmir to be mined, but regardless, there is little mining activity going on, not enough to cause conflict. One of the main physical geography features of importance is water. The Indus River flows through Kashmir from Tibet and into Pakistan. The control of this river system is critical to the survival of people living in northern Pakistan. If India

were to place a dam on the river and divert the water to their side of the border, to the dry regions of the south, Pakistan could suffer a water shortage in the northern part of the country. Another aspect of the Kashmir conflict is the division of Pakistan and India, which pitted Muslims against Hindus along the border region. The religious differences have come to the surface again in the conflict over the control of Kashmir. Extremist movements within Kashmir by the Muslim population have fueled the division between those who support Pakistan and those who support Hindu-dominated India.

The Kingdom of Bhutan

Landlocked and mountainous, the small Kingdom of Bhutan is remotely located next to the high Himalayas between China and India. The mountain peaks reach more than twenty-three thousand feet. Bhutan is about half the size in the physical area of the US state of Kentucky and has fewer than one million people. The southern plains are warm, with subtropical weather, but the higher altitudes of the snow-capped mountains have polar-type climates. The local people call their country the “Land of the Thunder Dragon” because of the harsh storms they experience. Bhutan has large areas of natural habitat that have not been disturbed by human activity. The natural environment and the unique heritage

and culture make Bhutan an attractive destination for world travelers.

Bhutan is a small country without much industry or high-tech corporate involvement. Forestry and agriculture are the main economic activities, which account for approximately 60 percent of the country's population. Grazing livestock and subsistence agriculture are the primary types of farming. Increasing the country's modest infrastructure is hampered by its high mountains and remote location. India is Bhutan's leading trading partner and has played an essential role in the country's development and economic situation.



Modern transportation and communication technologies are being introduced in Bhutan and are changing how the country is connected to the rest of the global economy.

Satellite and cable television, mobile phone networks, the Internet, and major airline services are opening the doors of opportunity and interaction between Bhutan and the rest of the world. The introduction of technology services has prompted Bhutan's government to take steps to protect its environment and unique heritage. Tourism has become a significant focus of the changes. The country has stepped up its efforts to develop tourism but has targeted a specific type of traveler. Bhutan is an expensive place to visit, which has been the most significant deterrent for travelers. Visitors from places other than India and Bangladesh must agree to strict requirements set by the suppliers of Bhutanese tourism, including hefty daily fees to be in the country. Tourism is increasing in Bhutan but remains highly selective in its requirements and regulations. These measures ensure that the country's environmental health remains intact and that there is a minimal cultural impact from outsiders.

Buddhism is the state religion and is followed by about 75 percent of the population. Hinduism is the second-largest religion and is followed by the other 25 percent of the population. One of the government's principles in regulating development projects has been the concept of gross national happiness (GNH), which is used as a guide to determine the impact of a project on the culture and people of Bhutan. The stern measures regarding development have protected the country from severe environmental degradation and have helped sustain the Bhutanese people's lifestyles. Some

measures may appear harsh to outsiders, but the country is implementing these measures to promote the health and well-being of its people. For example, tobacco products are banned from being sold in the country. Democratic elections are becoming standard after centuries of rule by a monarchy. The transition intends to provide the people with more direct control of their government and country.

Interesting points about the culture of Bhutan include the issue of marriage. Marriages based on love are becoming more common in the cities, while arranged marriages remain a tradition in many of the smaller villages. Under the current legal system, women have the right to inheritance. Homes and personal possessions are passed down through a family's female children. Traditionally, male children do not inherit. Men are expected to earn their livelihood, and if they get married will most often live in the wife's house.

The Kingdom of Nepal

Bordering the highest mountain range in the world, the Himalayas, the country of Nepal, is isolated from any seacoast and buffered from the outside world by India and China. Nepal is about the same size in physical area as Bangladesh and is home to almost thirty million people. More than 80 percent of its people work the land in a region that is suffering from severe deforestation and soil erosion. Trees are cut down

to build houses, to cook food, and to keep warm. The monsoon rains wash the soil from the mountain fields into the valleys without trees to hold the soil. The combination of the fast-growing population with the loss of food-growing capacity means it is only a matter of time before a major crisis occurs in Nepal. Nepal's best farmland is in the **Tarai lowlands** of southern Nepal, while the north is quite mountainous. The towering elevation of the Himalayas restricts human habitation in the north. High population growth has also been outstripping the country's economic growth rate in recent years.



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Nepal has an abundance of tourist attractions, **Mount Everest** being its best known. In the universal cosmic, there are hundreds of ancient temples and monasteries. Swift flowing streams and high-mountain terrain support a modest trekking industry. Visitors to Nepal have an opportunity to glimpse a vibrant culture that few outsiders can witness. The downside is that tourism demands an investment in

infrastructure and services. Such investments direct funds away from schools, medical clinics, and public services needed by the Nepalese people. Income from tourism is needed and always welcome, but the trade-off with investments is a difficult choice to make. Tourism in Nepal is not as restrictive as that of Bhutan, and the unique physical and cultural landscapes will continue to draw travelers from throughout the world.

Hinduism is the main religion in Nepal, but a blend of Buddhism is prevalent in the north. The guardian deity of Nepal is Shiva. **Pashupatinath Temple**, the world's most significant Shiva worship site, is located in the capital city of Kathmandu. This Shiva temple is not only a UNESCO World Heritage Site but a major destination for Hindu pilgrims from around the world. Buddhist and Hindu beliefs often mix in Nepal. There are certain situations where the same deities and temples can be honored or worshipped by both religions.

In a different part of Nepal, Lumbini, near the city of Bhairahawa (Siddharthanagar), on the border with India, is another UNESCO World Heritage Site focusing on the birthplace of the Siddhartha Gautama, the founder of Buddhism. Prince Siddhartha Gautama was born about 563 BCE, near Lumbini. The city has recognized the prince with several monasteries and temples built in his honor. No other commercial or public buildings—such as hotels, shops, or businesses—can be constructed in the zone. The different

branches of the Buddhist faith each have their own specific designated sections of the zone. Lumbini is a primary pilgrimage site for Buddhist believers from around the world.

In the late 1700s, local states of Nepal were consolidated into the one kingdom and ruled by a monarchy. Royal families ruled the kingdom until the mid-1900s. Nepal has been free of British influence since 1947 but has had trouble establishing a stable central government. The royal family in charge of the kingdom was replaced in 1951, and further democratic reforms were made in 1990. Communist partisans from China have been active in insurgent activities. Frequent protests and civil unrest have caused political instability, which has discouraged tourism and has depressed the economy even further. The Maoist Communist movement and other opposition political parties held mass protests, culminating in a peace accord. Ensuing elections created the establishment of a federal democratic republic. The first president of Nepal was sworn into office in 2008. There is still much tension in the country between those loyal to the royal family and those wanting the royal family to be dissolved. Without a stable government, economic and political progress in Nepal will be a serious challenge.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is a beautiful island about half the size of Nepal.

The island has a warm, tropical type A climate, with forested hills and mountains in the center. Rivers flow from the center outward to water the farm fields of rice and other crops. The best farmland is located in the Sinhalese-controlled areas of the southwestern portions of the island. Cinnamon is native to the island and has been cultivated since colonial times as an important export. Coconuts, coffee, and tea are also valuable export products. The island is home to various national parks, four biosphere reserves, and several wild elephant herds. Sri Lanka has the potential to become a significant tourist destination with high incomes and a hub for international trade. Factors working against Sri Lanka reaching its potential are not based on their physical geography or location but are linked back to colonialism and cultural or ethnic divisions between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority.



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The people of South Asia follow various religions. Pakistan and Bangladesh are Muslim. India has a Hindu majority. About 90 percent of Nepal's people are Hindu, but many

follow a unique blend of Hindu and Buddhist beliefs. The small, mystical, mountainous kingdom of Bhutan is Buddhist. Sri Lanka has unique circumstances and is a mixed country with a robust Buddhist majority and an active Hindu minority. The conflict between the majority and the minority ethnic groups fueled a low-level civil war on the island for decades, and differences in religion, ethnicity, and politics have brought the country to a halt on various occasions.

Sinhalese people from somewhere in northern India moved to the island of Sri Lanka about 2,500 years ago. The Sinhalese brought with them Buddhism and the Sinhala language, which belongs to the Indo-European language family. They established themselves on the island for centuries. Portugal first colonized Sri Lanka, then Holland. When the British colonized South Asia, they took control of Sri Lanka. It was called **Ceylon** at that time and changed its name to Sri Lanka in 1972. The higher elevations of the center of the island were excellent for tea production; British colonizers established tea plantations there. To work the plantations, Britain brought thousands of Tamil laborers from southern India across the **Polk Strait** to Ceylon. Most of the Tamil speak a **Dravidian** language and follow the Hindu religion.

When the British were forced out of South Asia and left Ceylon, the Tamils remained on the island. The Tamils now comprise only 10 percent of the population and live mainly in the northeastern region of the island. They have been

pressuring the Sinhalese majority to split the island politically and grant them independence. For decades, an insurgent civil war was waged between the Tamil guerillas, called the **Tamil Tigers**, and the Sinhalese government. About sixty to eighty thousand people died in this conflict. Originally only controlling the **Jaffna Peninsula**, the Tamil Tigers later made claims on a large portion of the northeastern part of the island. The Tamil Tigers created a government in the north called **Eelam** and wanted to legitimize it. The Sri Lankan president announced an end to the civil war in 2009, and the Tigers admitted defeat at that time. This civil war devastated Sri Lanka's tourism industry and discouraged foreign investments, further reducing economic opportunities for the island.

The Maldives

Just north of the Equator in the Indian Ocean to the southwest of India lie the Maldives, a group of low-lying islands that consists of twenty-six atolls encompassing a territory of only about 115 square miles. Within the atolls are approximately 1,200 small islands, of which about 200 are inhabited. Portugal controlled the Maldives from 1558 during their colonial expansion into Asia. Holland took over from the Portuguese in 1654. The Maldives became a British protectorate in 1887, which lasted until 1965 when

independence was achieved. Three years later, the country became a republic. The Maldives is a country with many extremes. It is Asia's smallest nation in both physical area and population, with a majority Muslim population. The average elevation, roughly five feet above sea level, is the lowest in the world for any country.

Fishing and tourism are the main methods for Maldivians to earn a living. Tourism has increased in recent years because many islands and atolls are attractive destinations for world travelers. The first tourist resort opened in 1972. Since that time, dozens of world-class re-sort facilities have opened for business across the archipelago. Tourism is the country's number one means of gaining wealth. The coral reefs that make up the island chain are excellent for diving and water sports. The tropical climate and miles of sandy beaches provide for an attractive tourism agenda.

The Maldives is an example of an entire country that could be in danger of flooding because of climate change if polar ice melts and sea levels rise. Concerns over the future of the islands gave the president of the country a reason to announce a plan in 2008 to purchase land in other countries in case sea levels rise to a point where the Maldives are no longer habitable. The purchase of land from tourism receipts would provide a place for the Maldivians to move in case they had to evacuate the islands. The Maldives administration has worked hard to lobby the international community to address the increase in greenhouse gas emissions and the possibility of an

increase in sea level caused by the global warming aspect of climate change.

3.7 SUMMARY

The Himalayan Mountain ranges border South Asia to the north. Nepal is located along this border and is somewhat of a buffer state between India and China. Nepal has a high population growth rate. Most of its people work in agriculture. Deforestation is a primary environmental concern and causes erosion of the landscape. Landlocked and impoverished, Nepal struggles to maintain a stable government and adequate public services.

Britain colonized South Asia for ninety years. Colonialism brought a structured administration, a railroad system of transportation, and extensive port cities used for the export of goods from the interior. The political borders were established for South Asia by British colonizers, based on religious affiliation and economic advantages. The elevated British Sikhs from the Punjab to help rule over the Hindu and Muslim populations. English is widely used as a lingua franca.

Conflicts continue in mountainous Kashmir and tropical Sri Lanka. Kashmir's remote territory in the northern part of the realm is divided between Pakistan, China, and India. All three countries have nuclear weapons. Sri Lanka's majority Buddhist population is Sinhalese and is based in the southwest, controlling most of the island. Sri Lanka's

minority Tamil population is Hindu and is based out of the Jaffna Peninsula in the northeast. The Tamil want their own country and have claims on the is-land.

Port cities of South Asia are centers for international trade and development. There is a wide disparity between the rural poor and the affluent elites. India has been developing a strong economy based on a growing information sector, health care, and manufacturing. Motor vehicles and computer technologies are emerging in India and competing worldwide. Pakistan's economy struggles under the high population growth and Islamic extremism in the country.

Pakistan and Bangladesh were once under the same government, with Bangladesh formerly called East Pakistan. These Muslim countries have extremely high population densities and have agrarian economies. The Indus River flows through Pakistan and the two rivers of the Brahmaputra and the Ganges flow through Bangladesh. Monsoon flooding is a serious concern for Bangladesh; earthquakes have caused severe damage in Pakistan.

Hindu and Buddhist traditions first developed in South Asia. India has most of the world's Hindu followers. The caste system's concept has created socioeconomic layers in the culture that are being tempered by high urbanization rates. Buddhism has several branches that can be geographically identified as eastern, northern, and southern. Bhutan and Sri Lanka have Buddhist majorities. South Asia is also home to Sikhism and Jainism. Islam is active in South Asia: Pakistan is

the world's second-largest Muslim country, India has the world's third-largest Muslim population, and Bangladesh is a Muslim country as well. South Asia is also home to a Christian minority in addition to various other minority religious groups.

3.8 ATTRIBUTIONS AND REFERENCES

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PART IV

SOUTHEAST ASIA

4.1: IDENTIFYING THE REGION

The region between China, India, Australia, and the Pacific Ocean is known as Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia includes countries with political boundaries creating many shapes and sizes. The political borders were created through a combination of factors, including natural features, traditional tribal distinctions, colonial claims, and political agreements. The realm also has the fourth-most populous country in the world, Indonesia. Southeast Asia is a region of peninsulas and islands. The only landlocked country in the rural and remote country of Laos, which borders China, Vietnam, and Thailand. The physical geography of Southeast Asia includes beaches, bays, inlets, and gulfs. The thousands of islands and remote places allow refuge for a wide variety of cultural groups and provide havens for rebellious insurgents, modern-day pirates, and local inhabitants.

Southeast Asia can be divided into two geographic regions. The mainland portion, which is connected to India and China, extends south into what has been called the Indochina Peninsula or Indochina, a name given to France. This mainland region consists of Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, and Myanmar (Burma). This region has been

influenced historically by India and China. The islands or insular regions. The region consisting of the islands of Southeast Asia – Brunei, East Timor, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Singapore. To the south and east consist of nations surrounded by water. The countries in this region include Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia, East Timor, and the Philippines.



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4.2 PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE REGION

Climate

The islands and the mainland of Southeast Asia include a wide array of physical and cultural landscapes. The entire realm is located in the tropics except for the northernmost region of Burma (Myanmar), which extends north of the Tropic of Cancer. A tropical Type A climate dominates the region, and rainfall is generally abundant. The tropical waters of the region help moderate the climate. Southeast Asia is located between the Indian Ocean on the west and the Pacific Ocean on the east. Bordering the many islands and peninsulas are various seas, bays, straits, and gulfs that help create the complex maritime boundaries of the realm. The South China Sea is a significant body of water that acts as a separator between the mainland and the insular region. The thousands of islands that make up the various countries or lie along their coastal waters create a matrix of passageways and unique physical geography.

River Systems

The three longest rivers of the realm, Mekong, Red, and Irrawaddy, are located on the mainland and have their headwaters in the high elevations of the Himalayan ranges of China. The Mekong River makes its way from the high Himalayas in China and helps form the political borders of Laos and Thailand on its way through Cambodia to Vietnam, where it creates a large delta near Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon). The Red River flows out of China and through Hanoi to the Red River delta on the Gulf of Tonkin. The Irrawaddy River flows through the length of Burma, providing for the core area of the country. Another major river of the mainland is the Chao Phraya of Thailand. With its many tributaries, the Chao Phraya creates a desirable core area that is home to the largest population. Many other rivers can be found on both the mainland and the insular region. The rivers transport water and sediments from the interior to the coasts, often creating large deltas with fertile soils that are major agricultural areas. Multiple crops of rice and food products can be grown in the fertile river valleys and deltas. The agricultural abundance is needed to support the ever-increasing populations of the realm.

Tectonic Activity

Tectonic plate activity has been responsible for the existence of the many islands and has created the mountainous terrain of the various countries. High mountain ranges can have peaks that reach elevations of over fifteen thousand feet. The high-elevation ranges of New Guinea, along the equator, actually have glaciers, ice, and snow that remain year-round. The island of Borneo, in the center of the insular region, is a segment of ancient rock that has been pushed upward by tectonic forces to form a mountainous landmass. The mountains on Borneo have been worn down over time by erosion. Mountains and high-lands stretch across the northern border of the realm along the borders with India and China. The interior nature of this border makes it less accessible. Similar dynamics can be found in the interior of the insular region's islands, where the isolation and remoteness have helped create the environmental conditions for unique flora and fauna. In the highland areas, the human cultural landscape can be diverse. Time and isolation have worked together to form the traditions and cultural ways that give local groups their identity and heritage.

The tectonic activity makes the region vulnerable to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. In the Philippines, the volcanic peak of Mt. Pinatubo erupted in 1991, spewing ash and smoke into the atmosphere and impacting much of the planet. An earthquake of 9.0 magnitude occurred off the

coast of the Indonesian island of Sumatra in 2004 and caused widespread disaster throughout the broader region of the Indian Ocean. As many as one hundred fifty thousand deaths were reported, mainly from flooding. A thirty-five-foot-high wall of water from the tsunami devastated many coastal areas from Thailand to India.

https://youtu.be/a_ZIPrBm3V0

Palm Oil Deforestation



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4.3 HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE REGION

Impact of Colonialism

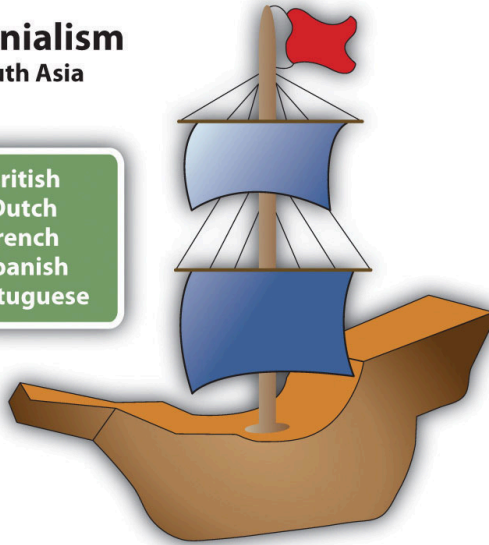
Southeast Asia has not escaped the impact of globalization, both colonial and corporate. As Europeans expanded their colonial activities, they made their way into Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia was heavily influenced by European colonialism. The only area of the region that was not colonized by the Europeans was Thailand, which was called Siam during the colonial era. It remained an independent kingdom throughout the colonial period and was a buffer state between French and British colonizers. The Japanese colonial empire controlled much of Southeast Asia before World War II.

Some of the countries and regions of Southeast Asia became known by their colonial connection. Indonesia was once referred to as the Dutch East Indies, which was influential in the labeling of the Caribbean as the West Indies. French Indochina is a term legitimized for historical references to the former French claims in Southeast Asia.

Malaya and British Bor-neo each had its currency based on a dollar unit that was legal tender for the regions of the Federation of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, North Borneo, and Brunei. Independence from the European powers and freedom from Japanese imperialism by the end of World War II provided a new identification for the various countries of the realm. Cultural and economic ties remain between many former colonies and their European counterparts.

Colonialism South Asia

British
Dutch
French
Spanish
Portuguese



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East Timor, a former Portuguese colony south of Indonesia, has been the most recent colony to gain independence. Timor

is an island just north of Australia, with the western portion is claimed by Indonesia. The whole island was annexed to Indonesia in 1975. Separatist movements that entailed conflict and violence caused the eastern portion to be granted independence in 2002 finally. Since then, East Timor has been working to establish itself as a country and is negotiating its offshore boundary to include substantial oil and gas reserves.

Cultural Geography

Southeast Asia has a population of more than six hundred million people; more than half the population lives on the many islands of Indonesia and the Philippines. The small island of Java in Indonesia is one of the most densely populated places on Earth. More than half of the two hundred forty-five million people who live in Indonesia live on the island of Java. The island of Luzon in the Philippines is also one of the densely populated areas of the insular region. The Philippines has over one hundred million people, Vietnam has more than ninety million, and Thailand has about sixty-seven million. Local areas with high food-producing capacity are also high population centers, including deltas, river valleys, and fertile plains.

The ethnic mosaic of Southeast Asia is a result of the emergence of local differences between people that have evolved into identifiable cultural or ethnic groups. Though

there is a multitude of specific ethnic groups, many of the larger ones stand out with recognizable populations. On the mainland, the Burmese, Thai, Khmer, and Vietnamese are the largest groups, coinciding with the physical countries from Burma to Vietnam. A similar situation can be found in the insular region. Many distinct groups can exist on the many islands of the region. The island of New Guinea, for example, has hundreds of local groups with their languages and traditions. Many ethnic groups are dominated by Indonesians, Malays, and Filipinos, coinciding with the countries of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Each of these main groups has many subgroups that hold to their cultural heritage in the areas where they exist. The many islands of Indonesia and the Philippines create the opportunity for diversity to continue to thrive, despite the globalization process that increased the interaction and communication opportunities between groups.

Indonesia is also home to the largest Muslim population in the world. All major religions can be found here. The Philippine population is predominantly Christian, but there is a minority Muslim community, including rebel insurgents. Most of the people in Malaysia follow Islam. About 95 percent of the people in Thailand and more than 60 percent of Laos are Buddhists. Hinduism is present in the Indonesian island of Bali and various other locations in the region. Animism and local religions can be found in rural and remote

areas. Southeast Asia is a mix of many ethnic groups, each with its history, culture, and religious preference.

Political Conflicts

Communist ideas spread to Southeast Asia, where Marxism influenced the governments of newly independent countries. In Vietnam, for example, a communist movement was begun by Ho Chi Minh to try to gain independence from France following the end of Japanese occupation in World War II. The communist forces overcame the French in a crucial battle in 1954 and established a government in the northern territory. The country was then divided into a communist north and anti-communist and majority Catholic south. This was a time of high tension between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the US feared that the entire region would eventually come under communist control, essentially creating a Western capitalist hemisphere and an Eastern communist hemisphere. The fear that the fall of one country to communism would lead to the fall of other surrounding countries to communism was known as **domino theory**, and was initially meant as an anecdote but became the basis for US foreign policy in the region. (Finlayson, 2019)

The United States aimed to support South Vietnam's resistance to the communist north's unification goal and began sending military advisors to the region. Military combat

units followed, and bombing campaigns began in 1965. The terrain of Vietnam was quite different from the geography of other areas where the US had previously fought. Much of Southeast Asia was tropical rainforest and was ill-suited for the types of tanks and heavy artillery that had been so successful in World War II. The Viet Cong, referring to the Vietnamese communists, engaged in guerrilla warfare, using the terrain to support small, mobile military units. To try to combat these tactics, the US military sprayed chemical defoliants and herbicides, like Agent Orange, over Vietnam's forests. In the end, waning support for the Vietnam War led the US to withdraw, and in 1975, Vietnam was unified under communist rule. Over 1 million Vietnamese and 58,000 Americans died in the fighting. Millions of others were exposed to Agent Orange, causing health problems and disabilities, and the chemical had devastating effects on Vietnam's ecosystem where it has lingered in the soil. (Finlayson, 2019)

During the same period, a communist organization known as the, which is French for "Red Khmers," came to power in Cambodia. Khmer refers to the dominant ethnic group in Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge opposed Westernization and US involvement in the newly independent country and believed in returning to an agrarian society. Pol Pot (1925-1998 CE), the Khmer Rouge leader, led a campaign to eliminate the country's schools, hospitals, and other institutions and make the entire society work on collective farms. Urban cities would

no longer be the economic and political focus, but rather wealth would be spread around the countryside. Most of the country's intellectuals, including teachers and even people with glasses who were perceived as academic, were killed. Large prison camps were set up to house those who were believed to be a threat to communism. Cambodians of other ethnicities or who practiced religion were also executed. More than one million people were killed in total, often buried in mass graves known as The Killing Fields. Cambodia's attempt to transform into an agrarian society ultimately led to widespread famine and starvation. In 1978, Vietnamese forces invaded Cambodia and defeated the Khmer Rouge, but human rights continued to be severely restricted. (Finlayson, 2019)

Much of East and Southeast Asia exhibit characteristics of a shatter belt, an area of political instability that is caught between competing states' interests. Beginning in the colonial era and continuing today, Western involvement in this region has led to industrialization and economic growth and, at other times, economic depression and a drive to return to traditional values. Today, political instability continues to plague several countries in the region. (Finlayson, 2019)

Overseas Chinese

Southeast Asia is also home to over thirty million overseas Chinese – ethnic Chinese who live outside of China. The

Chinese exodus to the realm was the greatest during the last Chinese dynasties and the colonial era. European colonial powers enhanced this migration pattern by leveraging the use of people with Chinese heritage in their governing over the local populations in the realm. Life has often been difficult for overseas Chinese. The Japanese occupation of the realm during World War II was a time of harsh discrimination against Chinese. Japanese occupation and colonialism diminished with the end of World War II. The overseas Chinese minority retained an economic advantage because of their former colonial status and their economic connections. Chinatowns emerged in many of the major cities of Southeast Asia. The discrimination against the Chinese, fueled by religious or socioeconomic differences, often continued after World War II by the local ethnic majorities. Nevertheless, overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia have been instrumental in promoting the global business arrangements that have established the Pacific Rim as a significant player in the international economy.

4.4 MAINLAND COUNTRIES



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Vietnam

The elongated state of Vietnam is slightly larger than Italy and about three times the size of the US state of Kentucky. In 2010 it was estimated to have a population of about ninety million people. Sixty percent of the population is under age twenty-one. This indicates that the population was only about half its current size at the end of the Vietnam War. Vietnam has two main urban core areas: Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) in the south and the capital, Hanoi, in the north. The middle region of Vietnam is narrow, with higher

elevation. Each core area is located along a significant river delta. The **Red River delta** is located east of Hanoi in the north, and the mighty **Mekong River delta** is located next to Saigon in the south. These river deltas deposit silt from upstream and provide excellent farmland for growing multiple crops of rice and food grains per year.



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Vietnam has a tropical Type A climate with a long coastline. Fishing provides protein to balance out nutritional needs.

More than 55 percent of the population works in agriculture. Family size has dropped dramatically because of population growth and a trend toward urbanization. The rural-to-urban shift has caused the two main urban core cities to proliferate. Saigon is the largest city in Vietnam and has a port that can accommodate oceangoing vessels. Hanoi, the capital, is not a port city located inland from the nearest port of Haiphong on the coast of the Gulf of Tonkin.



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Political Geography

An understanding of Vietnam is not complete without understanding the political control the country of Vietnam has experienced. Different Chinese dynasties controlled Vietnam at different times. When France colonized Vietnam, it imposed the French language as the lingua franca and Christianity as the main religion. Both changes met resistance, but the religious persecution of Buddhism by the French colonizers created harsh adversarial conditions within the

culture. French domination started in 1858. The Japanese replaced it in 1940; this lasted until the end of World War II. With the defeat of Japan in 1945, the French desired to regain control of Vietnam. The French aggressively pushed into the country, but met serious resistance and were finally defeated in 1954 with their loss at the battle of Dien Bien Phu.

In the mid-1950s, the Vietnamese began asserting their request for an independent country. The dynamics were similar to that of Korea. After 1954, Vietnam needed to establish a government for their independent country. They were not unified. The northern section rallied around Hanoi and was aligned with Communist ideology, while the southern region organized around Saigon and aligned itself with capitalism and democratic reforms.

During the Cold War, the United States opposed Communism wherever it emerged. Vietnam was one such case. Supporting South Vietnam against the Communists in the north started not long after the defeat of France. By 1960, US advisors were working to bolster South Vietnam's military power. After the assassination of John F. Kennedy, President Lyndon Johnson had to either pull out of Vietnam or push the US military to engage the Communists in North Vietnam fully.

Not wishing Vietnam and its neighbors to “go Communist” through a domino effect—where if one country fell to Communism, its neighbors would follow—President Johnson decided to escalate the war in Vietnam. By 1965,

more than one half million US soldiers were on the ground in Vietnam. History has recorded the result. Just as Vietnam was divided into political and economic ideology, the Vietnam War also divided the US population. Protests were frequent on college campuses, and public support for the war was often met with public opposition.

The US government, under President Richard Nixon, finally decided to pull all US troops out from Vietnam after a cease-fire was agreed upon in a Paris peace conference in 1973. More than fifty-seven thousand US soldiers had died in the Vietnam War. Two years later, in 1975, the North Vietnamese Communists invaded South Vietnam and controlled the entire country. Vietnam was unified under a Communist regime. More than two million people from South Vietnam escaped as refugees and fled to Hong Kong, the United States, or wherever they could go. Thousands were accepted by the United States, which caused ethnic rifts in US communities. The United States placed an embargo on Vietnam and refused to trade with them. The United States did not open diplomatic relations with Vietnam again until 1996. The Vietnam War devastated the infrastructure and economy of the country. Roads, bridges, and valuable distribution systems were destroyed. Vietnam could only turn to what it does best: growing rice and food for its people.

Modern Vietnam

For the past three decades, Vietnam has been recovering and slowly integrating itself with the outside world. Its population has doubled; most of the population was born after the Vietnam War. Their main goal is to seek out opportunities and advantages to provide for themselves and their families. Vietnam has been a rural agrarian society. Looking for cheap labor and economic profits, economic tigers such as Taiwan are turning to Saigon to set up light manufacturing operations. People from rural areas are migrating to the cities looking for employment. Saigon has more than 8.5 million people and has an exclusive economic zone (SEZ) located nearby. The rural-to-urban shift is kicking in. After 1975, Saigon was renamed Ho Chi Minh City after the victorious Communist leader, Ho Chi Minh. Many of the people who live there and in the United States still refer to it as Saigon.

Any country that experiences rapid urbanization or economic change suffers from acute growing pains. Conflicts usually erupt over control of resources and land ownership, ethnic groups usually vie for power, and environmental damage is usually extensive. All these issues are evident in Vietnam. The dogmatic Communist government has acted to moderate both the problems and economic growth. The future of Vietnam may be similar to most of Southeast Asia as it balances out the strong adhesive forces of local culture and the demands of a competitive global economy. The growing

population will add to the demand for resources and employment opportunities. Vietnam has been a relatively emerging country, but it still has been able to export rice and other agricultural products. In recent years, the Communist government has implemented a series of reforms moving toward a market economy, which has encouraged economic development and international trade.

Globalization has prompted a robust rural-to-urban shift within Vietnam. The rural countryside is still steeped in its agrarian heritage based on growing rice and food crops. However, the urban centers have been energized by modern technology and outside economic interest. Vietnam has enormous growth potential. The country's urban centers are shifting from stage 2 of the economic development index into stage 3, where the urbanization rates are the strongest. The rapid rise of the global economy connected to Vietnam's major cities has provided jobs and opportunities highly sought after by the growing population. The city streets are filled with a sea of motorbikes and bicycle traffic, while cars and trucks are becoming more plentiful. Saigon has been a significant destination for the export textile industry and other industries seeking a cheap labor base. Cell phones and Internet services have connected a once-isolated country with the rest of the world.

Laos

he geography of Laos centers on the Mekong River basin and rugged mountain terrain. Laos is landlocked. Vietnam shields Laos from the South China Sea to the east and Cambodia to the south. It does not have a port city to the outside world. The mountains reach up to 9,242 feet. The Type A climate provides a rainy season and a dry season. The rains usually fall between May and November, followed by a dry season for the remainder of the year. The Mekong River flows through the land and provides freshwater, irrigation, and transportation. The country's capital and largest city, Vientiane, is located on the Mekong River. Laos is about the same size in area as the US state of Utah.



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The Lao Kingdom coalesced in the 1500s and was eventually absorbed by the Kingdom of Siam, which thrived during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. France muscled in during the colonial era and created a French Indochina. Laos received independence from France in 1949. Laos is a rural country with about 80 percent of the population working in agriculture. Globalization has not yet been established in this country, and infrastructure is less developed. Electricity is not

available consistently, and transportation systems are quite essential. There are not any railroads, and there are few paved roads. Clean water for human consumption is not always available. The economy is based on agriculture, with some outside investments in mining and natural resources.

Two-thirds of the people in Laos are Buddhists. Animist traditions and spirit worship have the next highest percentage of followers. Muslims and Christians make up a small percentage of the population. Lao make up the largest ethnic group and 70 percent of the population. Other ethnicities include the Hmong and mountain tribal groups, which can be found in various remote regions of the country. The remoteness and rural heritage of the many tribal people have started to attract tourism. Tourism has increased in recent years, partially due to the Chinese government allowing its citizens to travel outside their borders from China into Laos. Laos has two UNESCO World Heritage Sites: the historic town of Luang Pra-bang, and the southern site of Wat Phou (Vat Phu), an ancient Hindu temple complex.

Laos is an emerging country. It has fewer employment opportunities for its citizens than other developing countries have. The one-party Communist political system of the Cold War has been decentralizing control and working to encourage entrepreneurial activities. Foreign investments are increasing in the areas of mining, hydroelectric production, and significant construction projects. The World Bank and other agencies have supported efforts to improve

infrastructure and provide opportunities for Laos. China has been partnering with the Laotian government to help build rail transport in the country. These efforts have assisted in reducing poverty and increasing the economic and physical health of the country.

Cambodia

A Notorious History

Cambodia is about the same size in area as the US state of Missouri. The population in 2008 was estimated at 14.5 million. The Khmers created the Angkor Empire, which reached its peak between the tenth and thirteenth centuries. Preceding the colonial period, the Angkor Empire entered into a long era of decline. France took control of the region in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Japan took control of the region before World War II and then relinquished it when they surrendered to end World War II. France regained control of Cambodia after the Japanese army was defeated. Cambodia finally received independence from France in 1953.



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To understand Cambodia, one has to understand its recent history. This country has undergone some of the most extreme social transitions in modern times. The **Khmer Rouge**, under the leadership of **Pol Pot**, turned society upside down, giving the country a legacy that it will carry forward as integration continues into the world community.

Between 1969 and 1973, while the United States was fighting the Vietnam War, US forces bombed and briefly

invaded Cambodia to disrupt the North Vietnamese military operations and oppose the Khmer Rouge. The war made millions of Cambodians refugees, and many ended up in Phnom Penh. The number of casualties from the US bombing missions in Cambodia is unknown. The US war in Vietnam thus had spilled over into Laos and Cambodia and advanced the opportunities for the Khmer Rouge regime to gain power. Pol Pot's Communist forces of the Khmer Rouge finally captured Cambodia's capital of Phnom Penh in 1975. The Khmer Rouge evacuated all cities and towns and forced the people to move to the rural areas. The country's name was changed to Democratic Kampuchea. China's Great Cultural Revolution and the Great Leap Forward disaster were influential for Pol Pot's radical experiment. Since Vietnam was supported by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the Khmer Rouge looked to China for arms and support.

Pol Pot was creating an agricultural model for a new country based on eleventh-century ideals. People in urban areas were forcibly marched off into the countryside for labor in agriculture. Anyone who resisted or even hinted at dissent was killed. All traces of Western-ized ideas, technology, medical practice, religion, or books were destroyed. Thousands of people were systematically killed in an attempt to bring into being a rural agrarian utopian society. The thousands upon thousands who were systematically eliminated gave rise to the term **Killing Fields**, meaning

fields where large groups of people were forced to dig their graves and were killed. The mass killings were reminiscent of those carried out by Hitler, Stalin, and Mao. Pol Pot's regime also targeted ethnic minority groups. Muslims and the Chinese suffered serious purges. Professional, educated people, such as doctors, lawyers, and teachers, were also targeted for execution. According to some reports, the very act of wear-ing eyeglasses was a death sentence as it was a symbol of intellectualism. In a country of eight million in 1970, more than two million people were executed or died as a result of Pol Pot's policies. The total number will never be known. Hundreds of thousands became refugees in neighboring countries.

By 1978, the Khmer Rouge was isolated in the countryside. Vietnamese forces controlled urban areas. A decade of civil war and unrest followed. Paris peace talks, cease-fires, United Nations-sponsored elections, and coalition governments have since helped provide political stability. Pol Pot died under unclear circumstances in 1998 while being held under house arrest. As of 1999, the Khmer Rouge elements that were still in existence had surrendered or were arrested. Many of the Khmer Rouge leaders were charged with crimes against humanity by the United Nations-sponsored tribunals.

Modern Cambodia

Cambodia is working to become a democratic and open

country with established trade relationships with global markets. The people have struggled to create a stable society that can rebound from their legacy of turmoil and conflict. The country's population is relatively young. More than half the population is under age twenty-five; one-third is under fifteen. The rural areas and the generations who remain there continue to lack the basic amenities of modern society. Education, electricity, and modern infrastructure are lacking. More than half the population works in agriculture. Since less than 25 percent of the population lives in cities, Cambodia is likely to experience a high rural-to-urban shift in its future.

People are returning to religious practices that were banned during the Pol Pot era. Buddhism is the dominant religion of about 95 percent of the population. Small percentages of the population also practice Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, or tribal beliefs. There are at least twenty distinct hill tribes that hold to their traditions and cultural ways. The country has historically been self-sufficient with food, but the rapid population growth, political instability, and lack of infrastructure are challenging the future of the country.

Agriculture has been the main economic activity, though textiles (clothing manufacturing) have increased in recent years because of the low cost of labor combined with an abundant workforce. The international business sector has sought to exploit this opportunity. However, multinational corporations are hesitant to invest in a country that suffers

from political instability or a high level of corruption within the public and private sectors.

Cambodia has been attempting to build a sustainable economy. The textile industry is the number one source of national wealth. Sweatshops and low-tech manufacturing have begun to take root in the expanding capital city of **Phnom Penh**. Tourism is another sector that has experienced rapid growth. Though nonexistent in earlier decades, tourism has taken off. Cambodian tourism provides travelers with an experience that is more pristine and less commercialized. Tourism has been rated as the second-largest sector of the economy. One of the main sites that attract many visitors is the extraordinary ancient site of **Angkor Wat** (Angkor means “city” and Wat “temple”). This site is one of the best-preserved showcases of Khmer architecture from its early empire years. Angkor Wat is being developed as a major tourist attraction. The twelfth-century complex was first a Hindu site dedicated to Vish-nu, and then it was converted to a Buddhist site. Angkor Wat has become an international tourist destination. It is one of the largest temple complexes in existence in the world and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The city of Angkor has been estimated to have been the largest city in the world at its peak. As many as a thousand other temples and ancient structures have been recovered in the same area in recent years.

Cambodia has pressing environmental problems. The country has the notorious designation by the UN as the

nation with the third-highest number of land mines on Earth. Since 1970, more than sixty thousand people have been killed, and many more injured or maimed because of unexploded land mines in rural areas. The growing population, attempting to recover from decades of devastation, has cut down the rainforest at one of the highest rates in the world. In 1970, rainforests covered about 70 percent of the country. Today there is only about 3 percent of the rainforest left. A rise in the need for resources, along with illegal timber activities, has devastated the forests, resulting in soil erosion and loss of habitat for indigenous species. The loss of natural resources is likely to hinder the country's economic growth.

Thailand

Thailand is larger than Laos and Cambodia combined but smaller than Burma. The physical regions that makeup Thailand include the mountainous north, where peaks reach up to 8,415 feet; the sizeable southeastern plateau bordering the Mekong River; and the mainly flat valley that dominates the center of the country. The southern part of the country includes the narrow isthmus that broadens out to create the Malay Peninsula. The tropical Type A climate has dry and rainy seasons similar to Cambodia. The weather pattern in the central part of Thailand, north of the **Malay Peninsula**, has three seasons. The primary rainy season lasts between June

and October when the southwest monsoon arrives with heavy rain clouds form over the Indian Ocean. After the rainy season, the land cools off and starts to receive the northeast monsoon, which is a cool, dry wind blows from November to February. Considered the dry season, its characteristics are lower humidity and cooler temperatures. From March to May, the temperatures rise, and the land heats up. Then the cycle starts over again with the introduction of the rainy season. The weather pattern in the southern part of Thai-land in the Malay Peninsula receives more rain throughout the year, with two rainy seasons that peak from April through May and then again from October through December.



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Thailand was formerly known as the Kingdom of Siam. In 1932, a constitutional monarchy was established after a bloodless revolution erupted in the country. The name was officially changed to Thailand in 1939. The ruling monarch remains head of state, but a prime minister is head of the government. Either the Europeans or the Japanese never colonized Siam. The leaders of Siam played France and Britain against each other and remained independent of colonial

domination. During World War II, the Japanese did extend influence in the region. Thailand briefly engaged the Japanese military in World War II but worked out an armistice that used the Japanese military to regain territories lost to Britain or France. At the same time, Thailand was working to support Allied efforts in the region.

About three-fourths of the population is ethnically Thai. There are a noticeable Chinese population and a small percentage of people who are ethnically Malay. There are various minority groups and hill tribes. The country's official language is Thai. Buddhism is adhered to by about 95 percent of the population. The ruling monarch is considered the defender of the Buddhist faith. Southern Buddhism is fervently practiced here. Thailand does not use the Western Gregorian calendar. Thailand uses an official calendar based on an Eastern translation of the Buddhist era, which essentially adds 543 years to the Gregorian calendar. For example, when it was 2010 AD in the West, it was 2553 BE in Thailand.

There have been clashes between Thailand's small Muslim minority groups in the south, which have been increasing since 9-11. Islamic influences have been increasing near the border with Malaysia, which is about 60 percent Muslim. The Buddhist government of Thailand has sought to keep extremist groups like Al-Qaeda from operating within its borders. In recent years, a series of Muslim-inspired bombings

has increased social tensions and brought more attention to the religious division in the south.



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Thailand has an excellent record of economic growth and has been one of Southeast Asia's best performers in the past couple of decades. Thailand is developing its infrastructure and has established measures to attract foreign investments and support free-enterprise economic activities. The recent slowdown in the global economy and internal political problems have caused a sharp downturn in Thailand's economic growth. Nevertheless, Thailand remains a strong economic force and one of the best economies in the region. The positive indicators include a strong focus on infrastructure, industrial exports, and tourism.

Urbanization rates are increasing; at least one-third of the population lives in cities. Family size has fallen to lower than two children per family, while education rates have increased. The country has also tapped into its natural resources for export profits as the world's third-largest exporter of tin and

the second-largest exporter of tungsten. Light manufacturing has taken off and become a significant component of the economy, accounting for about 45 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). The country is a significant manufacturer of textiles, footwear, jewelry, auto parts, and electrical components. Thailand has been the major exporter of rice in the world and has a strong agricultural base.

Thailand is a newly industrialized country and has all its bases covered to build national wealth: a balance of agriculture, extractive activities, manufacturing, and postindustrial activities (tourism). Thailand is considered the third-largest manufacturer of motor vehicles in Asia, after Japan and Korea. Vehicle producers from the United States and Asia are manufacturing large numbers of cars and trucks in Thailand. Toyota dominates the market in both truck and auto production. Truck production is augmented by Mitsubishi, Nissan, Chevrolet, Ford, and Mazda. Honda, from Japan, and the Tata Motor Corporation, from India, are expanding their operations in Thailand. Thailand is in an excellent position to advance its economy and shift the whole country into the next stage of development to become a significant participant in the global economic marketplace.

The tourism industry has grown immensely in Thailand over the past few decades. Green and lush tropical mountain landscapes, the exquisite architecture of ancient Buddhist temples, and beautiful golden beaches along warm tropical coastlines make for an excellent tourism market. Some of the

best world-class tropical beach resorts are located along the sandy and sunny shores of Thailand. The country is open to outsiders and has welcomed tourism as part of its economic equation. The relatively stable country provides a safe and exciting tourism agenda that has a global clientele. The downside of the thriving tourism industry is the sex trade. Relaxed laws on sexual activity have made Thailand a destination for people from around the world seeking “sex tours” and erotic experiences. Not surprisingly, a sharp increase in the number of individuals infected with sexually transmitted diseases has been documented. Approximately one million people in Thailand tested HIV positive in the mid-1990s. The sex industry has been big business for Thailand and, at the same time, has created an unfortunate negative stereotype for the overall tourism situation. There is much more to the tourism industry in Thailand than the sex trade.

Thailand's country has the potential to recover from the global economic downturn and, once again, claim its role as an economic tiger of Southeast Asia. If political stability serves to enhance economic investments, the country will continue to experience economic growth. The low population growth is a model for other countries in the region. Thailand provides an excellent example of the theory that as a country urbanizes and industrializes, family size will usually go down. Thailand is also moving forward in the index of economic development. It is in stage 3, where there is a robust rural-to-

urban shift in the population. The capital city of **Bangkok** has stage 4 development patterns and is an economic core area for the country and the region. As large as New York City, Bangkok has developed into the political, cultural, and economic center of Southeast Asia. Often referred to as the “Venice of the East” because of its city canals, Bangkok has become a global city with a population of more than eight million people officially and more than fifteen million unofficially.

Myanmar or Burma

The Union of Myanmar (Union of Burma) is the official name for Burma. Since 1989, the military authorities in Burma have promoted the name Myanmar as a conventional name for their state. The US government and many other governments have not recognized or accepted the name change. Some groups within Burma do not accept the name because the translation of Myanmar is also the name of an ethnic minority in Burma. The use of the name Burma or Myanmar is split around the world and within the country.



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Burma is the largest country on the Southeast Asian mainland in terms of physical area. It is about the same size in area as Texas and had a population in 2010 of about fifty-four million. The country has a central mass with a southern protrusion that borders Thailand toward the Malay Peninsula. The northern border area between India and China has high mountains that are part of the Himalayas, with towering peaks extending to 19,295 feet. The **Irrawaddy**

River cuts through the center of the country from north to south, creating a delta in the largest city, **Rangoon** (Yangon). Most of the country's population lives along this river valley.

There are differences in the physical landscape between the north and south. The northernmost area is mountainous with evergreen forests. Cool temperatures are found in the north, and warmer annual temperatures are found in the south. The land cover is mainly deciduous forests west of the Irrawaddy River and north of Mandalay. The eastern region from **Mandalay** to the Laos border is scrub forests and grasslands. This area is considered the dry zone, with an annual rainfall of about forty inches. The more tropical south and coastal areas can receive higher levels of precipitation. The area around the core city of Mandalay was a significant focus of agricultural development before British colonialism. Dryland crops were most common. During the colonial era, the British looked to the fertile farmlands of the south-ern Irrawaddy delta and emphasized Rangoon as the center of their exploitations. Wetland rice is a significant crop of the southern Irrawaddy basin. The southwest and the southern protrusion are mainly tropical evergreen forests. There has been oil exploration along the coastal regions of the **Bay of Bengal** and the **Andaman Sea**.



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The country was colonized by the British and was once a part of Great Britain's empire in South Asia as a province of India. Burma was one of Britain's most prosperous colonies until World War II when the Japanese invaded, and war devastated the region. Democratic rule existed from 1948 until 1962 when an authoritarian military dictatorship took over the country. A revolutionary council ruled the country between 1962 and 1974. This government nationalized most of the businesses, factories, and media outlets. The overall operating principle of the council was a concept called the **Burmese Way of Socialism**. This concept was based on central planning and Communist principles mixed with Buddhist beliefs.

Between 1974 and 1988, the country's sole political party was the Burma Socialist Program Party, which was controlled by the same military general and his comrades who had been in control for decades. During this time, the rest of the world was advancing in technology and economic development and moving forward with advancements in health care and education. Burma remained an impoverished and isolated

nation. Several countries, including the United States, have trade restrictions with Burma. For decades, the authoritarian regime in Burma has been accused of serious human rights violations, which have been mainly ignored by the outside world.

Protests against the military rule have always existed in Burma, but have been suppressed by armed forces and the authoritarian government. In 1962, the government cracked down on demonstrations at Rangoon University, resulting in fifteen students killed and many others in need of medical attention. The military government has taken severe action against any anti-government protest activities. By 1988, the people of Burma were taking to the streets with widespread demonstrations and protests against the government over claims of oppression, mismanagement, and lack of democratic reforms. A total crackdown on the people was implemented, with thousands of protesters killed. A new council led by a military general created the **State Law and Order Restoration Council** a year later. Martial law was imposed, and even harsher policies were imposed on anyone opposing the government. This was when the name of Myanmar was first used for the country.

The name change and the military rule have not been universally accepted. The United States still refers to the capital city as **Rangoon**, not as **Yangon**. In 2006, military rulers moved the capital north to the city of **Naypyidaw**. The purpose of the move was to establish a forward capital and

shift development and political energy more toward the center of the country, rather than along the coast. World nations are divided on how to deal with the changes and military regime in Burma. The governments of some countries believe more sanctions should be implemented to force the leadership into compliance. Other countries believe sanctions are not effective against the government; that is, sanctions harm the people and do not affect the military leadership. Countries on this side of the equation believe that open trade is the best policy.

Anti-government protests erupted in 2007 when the military-ruled government allowed prices on fuel and energy to double and triple in price. Protesters were quickly and violently dealt with, and many were arrested and jailed. Later that year, thousands of Buddhist monks led a peaceful protest to gain the government's attention to make democratic changes. The demonstration ended in a renewed government crackdown. Another voice in the anti-government demonstrations was opposition leader **Aung San Suu Kyi**, a UN worker in the early 1960s and a Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1991. Her opposition to the military rule has led to imprisonment and house arrest for decades. She has been a symbol of the opposition and hope for democratic reforms. In 2010, Aung San Suu Kyi was finally released from house arrest and allowed more freedom of movement under government restrictions.



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Burma has been placed in the same category as North Korea and Somalia in terms of authoritarian rule, lack of human rights, and a stagnant economy. Economic conditions are poor. The military rulers have gained control of the central income-generating enterprises in the country, including the lucrative drug trade from the prime opium-growing region of the northern **Golden Triangle**, where Burma borders Laos and Thailand. All factors seem to indicate an increase in opium production in recent years. Precious gemstones such as rubies, sapphires, and jade are abundant in Burma. Rubies bring the highest incomes. Burma produces about 90 percent of the world's supply, with superb quality. The Valley of Rubies in the north is noted for quality gem production of both rubies and sapphires. Most of the gems are sold to buyers in Thailand. All the profits go to Burma's military rulers in the government. Since there is a high level of corruption and mismanagement within the government and business, the income from the gems produces limited economic development for the main population and discourages foreign

investment in the country. Burma has become one of the poorest countries in Southeast Asia. China has emerged as the leading trading partner with Burma and has been propping up the dictatorial military regime. China supplies the regime with arms, constructs many of the infrastructure projects, and supplies natural gas to the country.



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Burma is ethnically diverse. Though it is difficult to verify, the government of Burma recognizes one hundred thirty-five distinct ethnic groups within its borders. It is estimated that there are over a hundred different ethnolinguistic groups in Burma. About 90 percent of the population is Buddhist. This high level of diversity can allow for strong centrifugal forces that are not generally conducive to unity and nationalism. The heavy emphasis on the national military is one of the only centripetal forces within the population, even though the military leadership is also looked at with disdain by those desiring more openness and democratic conditions.



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4.5 THE INSULAR REGION

The **insular region** of Southeast Asia includes the countries of Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, East Timor, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Of the Southeast Asian countries, East Timor most recently gained independence, as was mentioned in the previous lesson. In comparing these island nations, extensive diversity in all aspects will be found. There are significant differences in cultural, economic, and political dynamics, and in the ethnic groups that make up the dominant majorities in each. There is also a high level of linguistic and religious diversity. The physical geography varies from island to island; some have high mountain relief, and others are low-lying and relatively flat. Active tectonic plate action in the region causes earthquakes and volcanic activity, destroying infrastructure and loss of life; both acutely impact human activities.



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Economic forces continue to prompt Southeast Asia countries to enter into trade relationships that integrate them with global networks based on dependency and reliance. The old colonial powers may no longer control them politically but may affect them economically. The new dynamics of corporate colonialism, with their economic power in the core economic regions, still seek to exploit the countries of Southeast Asia for their labor and resources. These Asian nations are developing their economies and using their labor and resources to gain national wealth and increase the standard of living for their people. Each country has to contend with globalization forces within the international network of economic relationships.

Malaysia

Malaysia is a country made up of various British colonies that came together as a federation and became an independent country. Britain started establishing colonies in the region in the late 1700s. The two main areas include the western colonies on the Malay Peninsula and the eastern colonies on

the island of Borneo. The western settlements were part of the Malay Peninsula, which included the colonies of **Pinang** and **Singapore**. Eventually, the British took control of the eastern colonies of **Brunei**, **Sarawak**, and **Sabah** on the island of **Borneo**. In 1957, the western colonies on the mainland peninsula broke from their British colonizers and became an independent country called the **Federation of Malaya**. In 1963, the British Borneo colonies of Sarawak and Sabah joined the Federation of Malaya to form the current country, which is called **Malaysia**. In 1965, Singapore broke off from Malaysia and became an independent country. Brunei, which was still a British protectorate, became independent in 1984.



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Malaysia has two mainland areas separated by the South China Sea. The regions of Sarawak and Sabah, on the island of Borneo, are called **East Malaysia**; the mainland on the Malay Peninsula is called **West Malaysia**. These regions have similar physical landscapes, which include coastal plains with nearby densely forested foothills and mountains. The highest mountains, rising 13,436 feet, are in East Malaysia on the island of Borneo. Located near the equator, Malaysia has a

tropical Type A climate with monsoons regularly occurring from October to February.



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Diversity of Culture and Ethnicity in Malaysia

Malaysia's culture is diverse in that several major religions are practiced within its borders. Islam is considered the official religion and is supported by at least 60 percent of the population. About 20 percent of the people are Buddhists, 10 percent Christians, and six percent Hindu. The remaining percentages of the population include traditional Chinese religions and local tribal beliefs. In this Islamic country, there are concerns that Muslims get preferential treatment by government programs and policies. There are even special judicial legal courts for Muslims only to work out issues regarding marriage, custody, inheritance, or other conflicting Islamic issues regarding faith and obligation. This court only hears Islamic issues and no other legal matters. There have

been movements by minority extremist groups that would like to see Malaysia shift toward a truly Islamic state, complete with the Sharia Criminal Code as the law of the land. The movement, however, has been cracked down on by the government. Since the 9-11 incident in the United States, there has been more concern about extremist religious views.



“Provinces in East and West Malaysia” by the University of Minnesota is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International.

People of Malay ethnic background make up more than 50 percent of the population. People of Chinese descent are the second-largest group at about 24 percent, an additional 11 percent of the population is made up of indigenous groups. During British colonialism, many people from South Asia were brought to Malaysia. For example, Tamils were brought from India to work the plantations. Their Hindu beliefs were infused into the culture, and some Tamils also converted to Christianity. Sikhs were brought from South Asia to help Britain run the country as police, soldiers, or security officers.

The Sikhs who came brought their religion with them, which added to the country's multireligious dynamics.

Malaysia's diverse ethnic and cultural mix often results in strong centrifugal forces that push and pull on the country's societal dynamics. China has been active in the business community and has established strong economic ties with regional countries that have Chinese populations. The single largest minority group in the province of Sarawak on Borneo is Chinese. As a minority group, Chinese citizens of Malaysia have felt discrimination. Since the official language is Malay and the official religion is Islam, there have been concerns about discrimination against all minority groups. Working through the cultural and ethnic diversity has been a significant challenge for the country. Each minority religious or ethnic group desires to celebrate its unique holidays. For example, there is the usual New Year's celebration on January 1. Then there is the traditional fifteen-day Chinese New Year celebration celebrated at a different time of the year. Sikhs celebrate the Sikh New Year, whereas Buddhists celebrate a holiday in honor of Buddha's life and enlightenment. Christians celebrate Christmas and Easter. Many other holidays of significance are respected or honored by various minority groups.

Economic Development in Malaysia

Malaysia has rapidly advanced its economy in recent decades

and is modernizing its infrastructure – roads, bridges, highways, and urban facilities. In the capital city, **Kuala Lumpur**, Malaysia, built a modern central business district with a twin high-rise office building claimed to be the world's tallest at the time of construction. Before the global economic downturn that started in 2007, Malaysia had developed a fast-growing economy and was industrializing at a rapid rate. Malaysia has taken advantage of its location on a significant shipping lane and has shifted to manufacturing as an essential sector of its economy. The country has been a leader in the export of natural resources such as tin, rubber, and palm oil and has developed its agricultural and extractive sectors to gain income. The 1980s and 1990s were prosperous times for the country, and it matured its manufacturing base from light tex-tiles into electronics and heavy industries.

One aspect of the country that is looming on the horizon and may cause problems is the high population growth rate. In 2010, Malaysia's population was estimated at more than twenty-five million, with a doubling time of about forty years. Though the country is 70 percent urban, family size (fertility rate) is still at about 3.0, which indicates an increasing population growth pattern. One-third of the population is under the age of fifteen. Malaysia is one case where the general principle that if a country urbanizes and industrializes, the family size will go down has not taken place fast enough. The fertility rate has dropped from 5.0 to 3.0, but it needs to get below a rate of about 2.0 if the country is going to stabilize its

population growth successfully. Unless the country addresses this population growth, the demand for resources might outstrip economic progress in the future.

Singapore

Under British colonial rule, the island of Singapore was included in the Malaysian federation. It broke away and became independent in 1965. It is a small island measuring about thirty miles long at its widest point. Singapore is about two hundred forty square miles in area. Singapore's most valuable resource is its relative location. Singapore is similar to Hong Kong in its development. With a good port, Singapore is a hub for ships sailing between Europe and China. It serves Southeast Asia as an **entrepôt**, or break-of-bulk point, where goods are offloaded from large ships and transported to smaller vessels for distribution to the Southeast Asian community.



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Singapore has made good strategic utilization of its geographic location by serving as a distribution center for goods and materials processed in the region. Crude oil from Indonesia is unloaded and refined here. Raw materials are shipped in, manufactured into finished products, and then shipped out to global markets. Since Singapore is small, it has had to concentrate on manufacturing goods that provide for optimal profits. As an economic tiger, Singapore has transitioned

through the same stages as Taiwan, South Korea, and Hong Kong to become an economic power in Southeast Asia.



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To keep labor costs low, initial manufactured products were textiles, clothing, and cheap goods. As incomes and labor skills rose, so did the complexity of the manufactured goods. The government of Singapore has targeted specific types of products to ensure a high-profit margin and a global market

need. This has included automation equipment, biotechnology, and high-end information technologies. Singapore does not manufacture automobiles, but it does manufacture robotic automation components that most modern auto manufactures will purchase and use. Medical technology is expensive and is in high demand the world over. Singapore is targeting this market. The information age has spawned new technologies, and Singapore has been at the center of this industry. Singapore has been a center for the production of computer disc drives for a multitude of global corporations.

Singapore Island is a swampy place with no natural resources. All production components, food goods, construction materials, and energy must be imported. Importing everything has raised the cost of living. To compete with the other Asian economic tigers in the global marketplace, Singapore has implemented severe control measures on its operations. There are harsh penalties for criminal activities and even misdemeanor offenses. Singapore is a safe place to live because of its strict state rules. It has an authoritarian government, which strives to create an attractive place for international corporations to operate. One of the objectives is to eliminate corruption and establish a business-friendly environment.

The government of Singapore has entered into trade agreements with two of its neighbors to provide raw materials and cheap labor. A **trade triangle** has been established

between Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Malaysia and Indonesia provide Singapore with raw materials and cheap labor; Singapore provides its neighbors with technical know-how and financial support. Everyone benefits. Singapore is an excellent example of the upper end of the economic spectrum in Southeast Asia. Countries like Laos or Vietnam would be at the opposite end since they have a mostly rural population based on agriculture that is just beginning to shift to the cities with industrialization. Singapore is already 100 percent urban with high incomes based on high-tech manufacturing and processing of raw materials. Singapore is an economic hub for Southeast Asia, complete with global airline connections, and is located on a major shipping lane. Singapore's world-class port is one of the busiest in Asia. The rest of Southeast Asia is somewhere in between these two ends of the spectrum as far as economic development is concerned.

Indonesia

The country of Indonesia is the world's largest archipelago state, consisting of more than 17,500 islands, about one-third of which are inhabited. Indonesia is the sixteenth-largest country in the world by area. The combined area of all the islands and regions of Indonesia would equal the size of Mexico's country. The country shares land borders with the Borneo side of Malaysia, the western half of the island of

Timor, and the western portion of the island of New Guinea, which is shared with the country of Papua New Guinea.



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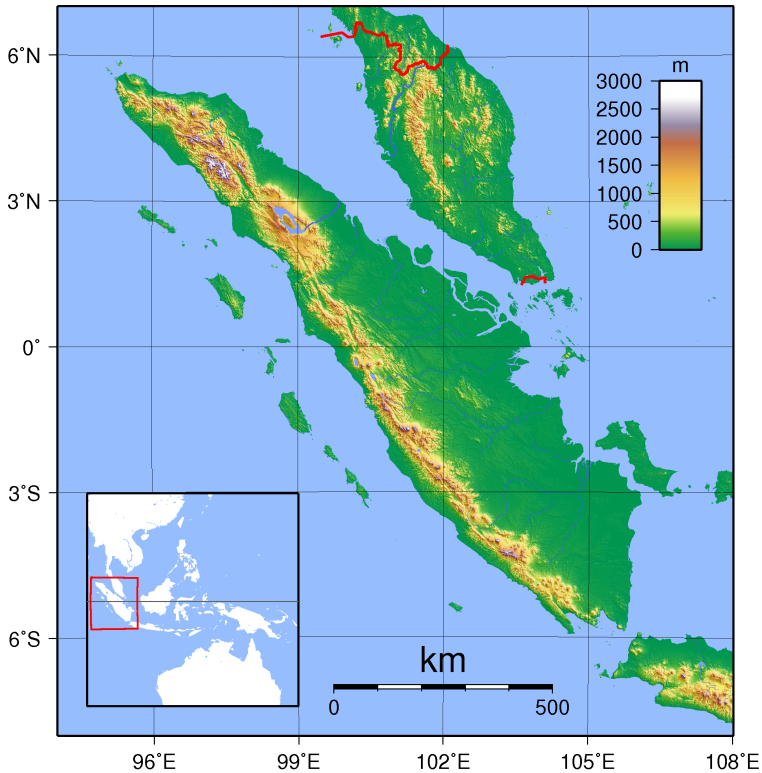
The country’s location on both sides of the equator provides a tropical Type A climate, complete with a monsoon season. Average rainfall can vary from seventy to two hundred forty inches per year. The highest mountain is in **West Papua** and rises to about 16,024 feet. Indonesia is located on the Pacific Rim, where tectonic plate activity produces earthquakes and

volcanic activity. The country is home to over one hundred fifty active volcanoes, including two of the most famous ones, **Krakatoa** and **Tambora**. Both had devastating eruptions in the past two centuries. One of the most violent volcanic explosions ever recorded in human history came from Krakatoa, which is located between the islands of **Java** and **Sumatra**. A series of eruptions in 1883 was heard as far away as the coast of Africa. Shock-waves reverberated around the globe seven times. Ash erupted into the atmosphere to a height of about fifty miles. The official death toll was 36,417, but estimates from local sources place it as high as 120,000. Global temperatures fell by about 2 °F, and weather patterns were disrupted for the next five years. Krakatoa remains active. Over the past few decades, the volcanic peak has been growing at an average rate of about five inches per week.



“Java Indonesia” by Brigitte Werner from Pixabay.

The tropical climate and the archipelago nature of the country provide for enormous biodiversity within the environment. Second, only to Brazil in its biodiversity, Indonesia is host to an enormous number of unique plants and animals. The habitats of many of these creatures are being encroached upon by human activity. The remote islands have more of a chance of escaping habitat devastation and remaining intact. However, agricultural and extractive economic activities have converted much of the natural environment into a cultural landscape that is not conducive to environmental sustainability.



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Animals such as orangutans are losing their natural forests and may become extinct if current trends continue. The timber industry has brought about deforestation. Slash and burn agriculture has destroyed forest habitat, and human development patterns, such as roads and urbanization, have altered the region’s ecosystems. According to recent reports, Indonesia is one of the largest emitters of carbon dioxide because of the high number of forest fires set each year. In

2009, the United States brokered a deal with Indonesia to forgive thirty million dollars of its debt if the country would work to protect forests on the island of Sumatra, which is home to endangered indigenous animals tigers, elephants, rhinos, and orangutans.



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In 2010, the estimated population of Indonesia was about 245 million. Indonesia has the fourth-largest population of any country in the world, after the United States, India, and China. Indonesia also has more Muslims than any other country in the world. More than half the Indonesia's population lives on Java, the island where Jakarta, the capital city, is located. Java is the most populous island in the world and has a population density of more than 2,400 people per square mile. Java is the size of the US state of Louisiana. Java has 135 million people, whereas Louisiana has 4.5 million people. Jakarta is a world-class city that is larger than New York City and encompasses a large metropolitan area,

complete with many manufacturing centers, business complexes, and housing districts.

The many islands of Indonesia are home to a large number of diverse ethnic and religious groups that vary as widely as any Southeast Asian nation. There may be as many as three hundred different and distinct ethnic groups in Indonesia. Many of the ethnic groups are further divided by islands or distance. More than two hundred fifty separate languages and hundreds of additional dialects are spoken. There are an estimated seven hundred fifty languages spoken on the island of New Guinea itself, with hundreds of them spoken on the Indonesian side of the island, in a population of less than three million. The most prevalent language group in the country as a whole is Javanese, which is spoken by roughly 42 percent of the population. Javanese includes the official language of Indonesian, which is taught in schools and used in business and politics as the *lingua franca* of the country. Many people speak more than one language or even several languages to communicate throughout the country.



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Islam was diffused to Indonesia in the thirteenth century, and by the sixteenth century, had become the dominant religion. The Indonesian constitution allows for religious freedom, although more than 85 percent of the population follows Islam. There are at least four other religions that are officially recognized: Christianity (both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism), Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Since Islam is followed by such a large percentage of the population, the other religions do not carry the same influence. Regional and ethnic differences play a role in the varied religious dynamics. The island of Bali, for example, is home to a majority Hindu population. Most of the Buddhists are ethnically Chinese, making up a small percentage of the population. Christians and Muslims have had conflicts on the island of Sulawesi. It is common to find the practice of these religions less than orthodox in the more rural communities of the country.



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Despite the diversity within the population, the country of Indonesia has established a substantial degree of nationalism as a centripetal force that holds the country together. There is a relatively high degree of stability despite the surface tensions or ethnic and religious conflicts that may erupt. An example of the social tensions is demonstrated in the case of Chinese citizens of Indonesia, who only make up about 1 percent of the population but impart a substantial influence over the privately-owned business sector of the economy. This seemingly inequitable relationship has resulted in considerable resentment by other portions of the population, often with violent results. The many islands have become natural divisions between cultural groups.

Some of the islands have attempted to break away in a devolutionary manner and become independent countries. Just as East Timor became independent, the most western province of Aceh on the island of Sumatra had a similar movement toward independence. West Papua on the island of New Guinea has also had an independence movement. The

Aceh situation was negotiated out while the West Papua movement has been suppressed by military and political force. Many of the islands possess large amounts of natural resources, so the country of Indonesia does not want to lose these national assets that could prove valuable in gaining wealth for the future. It is not easy to create national unity with such a diverse population scattered throughout such a vast archipelago.

Agriculture has been the historic base of the Indonesian economy. In 2010, it accounted for about 13 percent of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP). Agriculture is the largest employment sector – approximately 42 percent of the workforce. This equates to more than half of the population being rural. Many agricultural methods in rural areas are traditional; for example, farmers use water buffalo or oxen to till the land. The tropical climate and adequate rainfall provide for multiple crops of rice per year in many areas. Spices, coffee, tea, palm oil, and rubber are also produced in substantial quantities.

Industries are an essential building block for how a country gains wealth. In the case of Indonesia, industry accounts for about 40 percent of its GDP and employs about 20 percent of its workforce. Major industries include oil, natural gas, mining, and textiles or clothing manufacturing. Indonesia's economy has been affected by global markets, but in 2005 still managed to run a trade surplus. Japan has been its leading trading partner, and China has also been a major supplier of

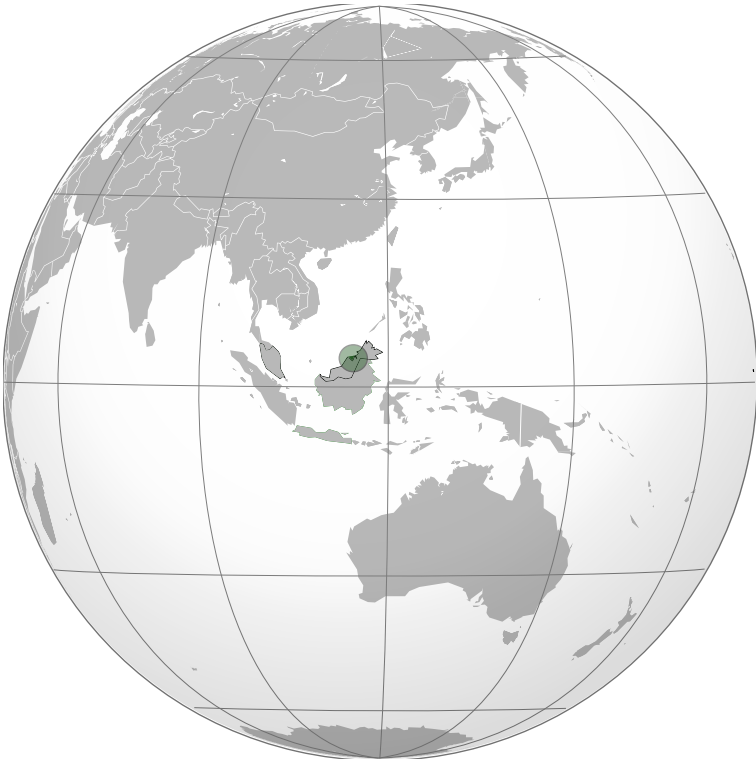
imported goods. Indonesia has been taking advantage of the trade triangle it has with its neighbors, Singapore, and Malaysia, to increase import and export trade activities.

The political background of Indonesia is similar in dynamics to many of its neighbors. Colonized by Europeans, Indonesia was previously called the Dutch East Indies, which explains why the islands of the Caribbean were called the West Indies. The Dutch colonized Indonesia in the early seventeenth century but had to relinquish possession of the archipelago to the Japanese in World War II. In 1945, after the Japanese surrendered, Indonesia declared independence, which was finally granted in 1949 after much negotiation. The country's government quickly moved toward authoritarian rule.

There were only two authoritarian leaders for fifty years: Sukarno (1949–68) and Suharto (1968–99). Near the end of Sukarno's rule, there were violent conflicts between Sukarno's military and the Communist Party of Indonesia, which resulted in more than five hundred thousand deaths. Suharto's regime was credited for substantial economic growth but was also accused of serious corruption and the repression of opposition political voices. Since 1999, Indonesia has conducted free parliamentary elections and is now considered the third-largest democracy after India and the United States.

Brunei

There are noticeable similarities between the oil-rich sheikdoms of the Persian Gulf region in the Middle East and the small sultanate of Brunei on the northern coast of Borneo. Bordered by Sarawak, the sultanate is two small separate regions along the coast of the South China Sea. The former British protectorate of Brunei is today a significant oil and natural gas exporter. It provides a high standard of living for its small population. The compact country is about the size of the US state of Delaware. The country's population for 2009 was listed at about 388,000. Brunei is attracting immigrants seeking opportunities and advantages. It is called a sultanate because the kingdom has been ruled by sultans (rulers) from the same family for the past six centuries.



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The main ethnic groups in Brunei are Malay, 66 percent, and Chinese, at 11 percent. Brunei is an Islamic State with Islam as its state religion. About two-thirds of the population is Muslim. Buddhism is the second-most popular religion. The ruling sultan is the head of state and the prime minister of the government and leader of the Islamic faith. Like states in the Middle East where Islam is the official religion, alcohol is banned, and the public consumption or sale of it is illegal.

Prohibition against alcohol has eliminated the establishment of pubs and nightclubs. Non-Muslims and visitors to the country can legally hold small quantities of alcohol for personal consumption.

The people of Brunei have a high standard of living, with the availability of modern amenities. The government has been concerned about integrating the country into the global economy. Natural gas and crude oil bring in about 90 percent of exports and just over half of the GDP. Education and medical care are free. The state subsidizes Food, housing, and rice farming. The state has been working on expanding the economy beyond natural gas and oil. Agricultural production has been increased, and unemployment has been a significant focus. The wealthy emirate has also been developing its tourism sector and the financial and banking industry.

Brunei may have to take a lesson from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), to work to develop a free trade zone to attract international trade, if the country wants to continue to gain wealth once the oil and natural gas run out. It has an excellent location on the South China Sea but would have to compete with the established economic tigers of Singapore and Hong Kong as well as the other rising urban centers in the region, such as Kuala Lumpur or Bangkok.

The Philippines

Located on the eastern side of the Southeast Asian community is the archipelago state of the Philippines. With more than 7,100 islands, many volcanic peaks, and an expanse of coastal waterways, the Philippines is home to more than ninety million people in a combined land area about the size of Arizona. The Philippines were a Spanish colony. The name is taken from Spain's sixteen-century King Philip II. Spain relinquished its claim on the Philippines to the United States in 1898 after its defeat in the Spanish-American War. The people of the Philippines wanted independence at that time and fought a bitter war with the United States in which more than a million people died. The United States allowed the Philippines to become a commonwealth in 1935. The independence movement was placed on hold while the Japanese invaded and controlled the Philippines during World War II. After the war was over, the United States granted the Philippines its independence in 1946.



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Environmental Forces

The islands of the Philippines are of volcanic origin. They are mainly mountainous and covered in a tropical rainforest. The highest mountain, at 9,692 feet, is Mt. Apo, which is located on the southern island of Mindanao. The Philippines has several active volcanoes. The northern island of Luzon is home to the Taal Volcano, Mt. Pinatubo, and Mt. Ma-yon.

The Pacific tectonic plate reaches the southern edge of the Philippine plate, where it meets the Eurasian Plate. The juncture of tectonic plates creates a similar situation to that of Tokyo, which is at the opposite end of the Philippine plate. Active seismic forces result in many earthquakes. As many as twenty earthquakes a day can be registered here, though many are too weak to be noticed. In 1990, an earthquake on the island of Luzon registered at a magnitude of 7.8 and killed more than 1,621 people, causing extensive damage.



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Luzon's Mt. Pinatubo volcano has been active in recent years. Before 1991, the mountain attracted little attention, was heavily forested and was home to indigenous tribal people. The volcano had a colossal eruption in 1991 that was recorded as the second largest in a century, after Alaska's 1912 Novarupta eruption. Mt. Pinatubo began giving signs of an eruption, which were heeded by the government. Thousands of people were evacuated from the area, which saved many lives. The eruption caused billions of dollars in damage. More

than eight hundred people were killed, and more than two million were directly impacted. The eruption destroyed more than eight thousand homes, and the overall effects of the volcano were felt around the world.

Mt. Pinatubo's eruption forced billions of tons of magma, ash, sulfur dioxide, minerals, and particulates into the atmosphere and onto the earth's surface. The sun was blocked out, temperatures dropped, and ash piled up in nearby areas, causing extensive damage to roofs, roadways, and agricultural lands. The damage from the eruption was amplified by the fact that a full-scale typhoon hit the country on the same date, bringing torrential rainfall and wind mixed with the ash in the air to create hazardous environmental conditions. The damage had a massive impact on the entire economy of the Philippines.

The eruption severely damaged civilian infrastructure and US military bases in the region. The Subic Bay Naval Base was fifty miles to the southwest of Mt. Pinatubo's summit, while Clark Air Base was less than sixteen miles to the east. Enormous clouds of ash covered everything. Due to the damage to the operations at the bases, the United States Air Force evacuated and moved all airbase personnel and military assets to bases in Guam, Okinawa, or Hawaii. The United States ultimately abandoned Clark Air Base, while Subic Bay reverted to the Philippines. There are thirty-seven volcanoes in the Philippines, of which eighteen are still active. Mt. Mayon is the most active volcano at present. It has had forty-

seven eruptions in recorded history. The eruption in 1993 killed sixty-eight people and caused the evacuation of sixty thousand more.

Earthquakes and volcanoes are not the only serious natural concerns of the Philippine Islands; they are also directly in the center of the Western Pacific's primary typhoon belt. As many as twenty typhoons occur yearly in the area of the islands, and roughly half of them hit the islands directly. The 1991 typhoon Thelma/Uring killed as many as eight thousand people. The 1911 typhoon dumped over forty-six inches of rain in a twenty-four-hour period. Flooding is usually the main problem with typhoons and is the number one killer related to typhoon deaths. Typhoon activity also brings precipitation to the islands and the region. The Philippines are in the path of typhoons in the Pacific and will continue to combat the effects of these powerful forces of nature.

Political Geography



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The Philippines can be divided into three central geopolitical regions: Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. The northern island of Luzon is home to the nation's national capital region with Quezon, the largest city, and Manila, the capital. Both cities are a part of metropolitan Manila, which has a population of more than twenty million. The northern island of Luzon is home to half the population of the country. The central Philippines consists of the Visayas Island group, including the islands between the Sulu Sea and the Philippine Sea. The large island of Mindanao anchors the southern region of the country.

The government of the Philippines is a constitutional republic with an elected president. With independence in 1946 came various leaders who have shaped the political landscape of the Philippines. After recovering from the devastation of World War II, the country prospered during the 1960s and showed positive economic gains. The political scene entered a difficult political era with the election of President Ferdinand Marcos in 1965, which turned into an authoritative dictatorship. During his time in power, the economy became sluggish, and social unrest began to arise in opposition to his leadership.

Barred by law from being elected for the third time, Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in 1972 under the premise that there was too much political conflict with Communist elements and Islamic insurgencies. Marcos ruled with his wife, Imelda Marcos, until 1986 when conditions

worsened, and the two were implicated in the assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino. Corruption, vote-rigging, and the dictatorial actions of President Marcos caught up with him through mass protests, which eventually led to his removal from office. He left the Philippines for his exile in Hawaii. It was later alleged that during his twenty years in office, Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos had embezzled billions of dollars of public funds and moved them to bank accounts in Switzerland, the United States, other countries, and into fictitious money-laundering corporations. Ferdinand Marcos died of illness in 1989 in Honolulu.

Imelda Marcos returned to the Philippines to run for public office and attempted a failed run for the presidency. Imelda was known for her thousands of shoes, which she had acquired while in power. Many of them are in a shoe museum in the Philippines. She was also known for her extravagant spending trips around the world. Several different political leaders have come to power since the Ferdinand Marcos era. Political stability has been challenging to achieve. The national leadership has faced Islamic insurgencies, attempted coups, corruption in the government, and high national debt. These issues continue today, but a modest level of stability has encouraged economic growth.

Cultural Geography

The Philippines is a diverse country with hundreds of ethnic

groups. Many tribal groups, as well as a large number of immigrants from Asia, Spain, and the United States, have made the Philippines home. Together with Spanish influence, mixed ethnic groups have been created. They are an example of the confluence of cultures that make up the country. The Philippines is the only country in Asia where Roman Catholicism predominates, other than recently independent East Timor.

Christians make up about 90 percent of the population. All but 10 percent identify themselves as Roman Catholic. A modest Muslim population is prominent in the southern island of Mindanao and neighboring islands. Islamic fundamentalism has increased the insurgency in the region, causing political and economic turmoil and conflict. People of Chinese heritage often follow Buddhism, Taoism, or Chinese folk religions. Various tribal groups still follow their cultural animist beliefs and have traditional shaman religious leaders.

The Philippines is home to more than 180 native languages and dialects. English and Filipino were declared the Philippines' official languages in 1987, even though Tagalog is the primary language spoken. Filipino is a version of Tagalog that is used in many of the urban areas. English and Tagalog are used in different parts of the country. The population growth rate is considerable. The Philippines will soon push past the one hundred million marks, at which point it will become a country where 35 percent of its citizens are under the age of fifteen. The average family size is more

than 3.2, which will continue to influence the country's economic situation.

The Global Economy and Outsourcing

The modest level of political stability has caused the Philippines to become an attractive destination for global corporations who seek to outsource their information and technology service jobs. Any work that can be conducted over the Internet or telephone can be outsourced to anywhere in the world with high-speed communication links. Countries that are attractive to business process outsourcing (BPO) are countries where the English language is prominent, where employment costs are low, and there is an adequate labor base of skilled or educated workers trained in the services required. The labor force of the Philippines meets all three of these requirements. The historical influence of the United States has provided a base of English language speakers. The country also has an adequate population base with the education or professional skills necessary to meet these demands. Corporate colonialism has the Philippines in its business focus and is finding a good source of available labor.

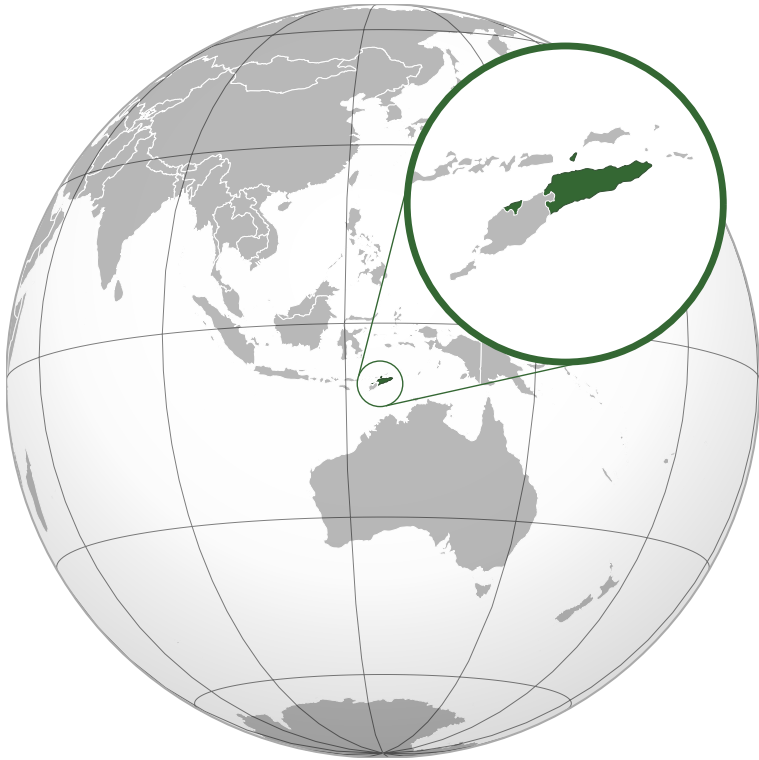
In 2005, information technology and BPO amounted to about thirty-four billion dollars globally. Since 2005, that amount has increased dramatically, doubling and tripling in some countries by 2009. India has been a significant destination for BPO, but the Philippines is gaining ground

and increasing its infrastructure to gain a larger share of the market. Other countries around the world are a part of this outsourcing market. This type of business activity shifts jobs from one country to another. A country might lose these types of jobs, but its corporations can remain competitive in the global marketplace if they can cut costs of operation by outsourcing their service work to a low-cost country.

East Timor (Timor-Leste)

Timor is an island off southern Indonesia and has been divided by its colonial history. The eastern half was a Portuguese colony beginning in the sixteenth century, where Portuguese colonizers introduced Christianity in the form of Roman Catholicism. The western half was associated with Indonesia, which was a Dutch colony during the colonial era. The Japanese occupied the Dutch colony during World War II but had to give it up after they surrendered in 1945. Indonesia received its independence in 1949 and laid claim to the whole island of Timor. East Timor made a declaration of independence in 1975 but was occupied by Indonesia. A bitter civil war erupted. A year later, Indonesia declared it its twenty-seventh province. The civil war resulted in the deaths of as many as two hundred fifty thousand people. It was not until 1999 that Indonesia finally ceded its political control over East Timor. The Australian military has been

instrumental in securing East Timor for independence and has been serving as a peacekeeping force for internal security for the past decade. The United Nations (UN) recognized East Timor as a sovereign independent country in 2002. The official name of the country is listed as Timor-Leste.



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Timor-Leste has a population of about 1.2 million. About 98 percent of the population is Roman Catholic. The only other predominant Catholic country in Asia is the Philippines.

About 90 percent of the population still works in agriculture. The country has had a difficult time establishing a stable government and reducing conflict. Almost all its infrastructure was damaged in the civil war, and rebuilding has been slow. Poor and impoverished due to the civil war over independence, the country does have some opportunity derived from the vast natural gas field in the vicinity. East Timor has been working to gain control of its maritime boundaries to benefit from offshore natural resources.



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4.6 SUMMARY

Southeast Asia consists of two central geographic regions: the mainland portion that borders China and the insular region that consists of islands or portions of them between Asia and Australia. The large island of Borneo is split between the three countries of Brunei, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

The only region of Southeast Asia that was not colonized by European countries was the Kingdom of Siam, which is part of Thailand's current country. This French-colonized region has been often referred to as French Indochina. Britain, Holland, Portugal, and Spain were also primary colonizers of the realm.

Southeast Asia is diverse in both human and its physical landscapes. Tropical climates dominate the realm with mountains and coastal areas covering the mainland surfaces. This realm has a high rate of seismic activity with many active volcanoes and is susceptible to earthquake activity.

All the main world religions can be found here. Indonesia is the most populous Muslim country in the world. East Timor and the Philippines are the only two predominantly Christian countries in Asia. Buddhism is the dominant religion of the mainland region. Both Malaysia and Singapore have sizeable Hindu minority groups.

Economic activities vary in Southeast Asia, with Singapore being an economic tiger and Brunei being an oil-rich emirate. Thailand is becoming a major manufacturing center, and the Philippines has been a destination for outsourced information jobs. Landlocked Laos and isolated Burma (Myanmar) have weak economies. Vietnam and Cambodia are recovering from political isolation.

Indonesia has the fourth-largest population in the world. Half of its people live on the island of Java. The Indonesian island of Bali has a Hindu majority and is a notable tourist destination. The island of Timor is divided between an Indonesian western half and the independent eastern half of East Timor, which is a former Portuguese colony.

4.7 ATTRIBUTIONS AND REFERENCES

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PART V

SUBSAHARAN AFRICA

5.1 IDENTIFYING THE BOUNDARIES

Subsaharan Africa includes the African countries south of the Sahara Desert. The African Transition Zone cuts across the southern edge of the Sahara Desert at the most comprehensive portion of the continent. Many of the countries in the African Transition Zone are included in the realm of Subsaharan Africa. The realm can be further broken down into regional components: Central Africa, East Africa, West Africa, and Southern Africa. At the eastern end of the African Transition Zone is the Horn of Africa, which is often included in East Africa. Maps vary in terms of which countries are included in each region, but this general geographic breakdown helps identify country locations and characteristics. Madagascar is a large island off the southeastern coast of Africa and is usually not included with the other regions because its geographic qualities and biodiversity are quite different from the mainland.

The continent of Africa is surrounded by saltwater. The Indian Ocean borders it on the east, and the Atlantic is on the west. The southern tip of the continent—off South Africa—is often referred to as the Cape of Good Hope, where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Indian Ocean. The continent of

Africa has several small island groups associated with the realm and independent countries. Approximately 350 miles off the coast of West Africa in the North Atlantic are ten islands that make up the independent country of Cape Verde. Just south of Nigeria on the eastern side of the Gulf of Guinea near the equator are the two islands that make up the independent country of São Tomé and Príncipe, a former Portuguese colony. The small country of Equatorial Guinea also includes an island off the coast of Cameroon where its capital is located. Three island groups in the Indian Ocean around Madagascar include the independent countries of the Seychelles, Comoros, and Mauritius.

There is considerable variation concerning how the regions of Subsaharan Africa are delineated or identified on maps. The debate is not about what regions are in Subsaharan Africa but about which countries are to be included in each region. The regions have both similarities and differences. The cultural geography varies widely from country to country and from one ethnic group to another, but at the same time, there are shared cultural patterns across all Subsaharan African regions. For example, colonialism has been a major historical factor in the shaping of the countries. Families are large, and the rapid rural-to-urban shift is occurring in all regions. Every region has large urban centers—often port cities that act as central core locations supported by a vast peripheral rural hinterland.

Globalization has entered into the dynamics connecting

these once-remote regions with the rest of the world.

Advancements in communication and transportation technology have created networks connecting Africa with global markets. Sub-Saharan Africa has a young population on the move, seeking to gain any opportunities or advantages. The political arena is dynamic: Political leadership changes through coups or military takeovers are frequent, as is authoritarian rule. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to some of the poorest countries in the world. Poverty is evident in the countryside and the urban slums of the largest cities, while bitter civil wars are a part of every region's history. Violence and conflicts continue in some areas, while other areas exhibit political stability and thriving economies. The diversity in human geography is the most noteworthy dynamic in Sub-Saharan Africa. The variety of ethnic groups, along with the multiplicity of languages and religious affiliations, create strong centripetal and centrifugal forces that interact in a thriving sea of cultural diversity.

Most of the population live an agrarian lifestyle, but some develop the skills necessary to adapt to the rapid globalization wave, which is importing new technology and new ideas to the continent. The urban core areas of the continent are the main focus of global trends in technology and communication. These urban core areas exhibit the typical dynamics of the core-periphery spatial relationship. Sub-Saharan Africa has many core areas and many peripheral areas. The core urban centers have political power thanks to

the social elites who have connections to the global economy and often dominate political activities.

These core urban areas are often magnets for people from large families in rural peripheral areas seeking employment. Millions of people in Africa who seek employment are willing to migrate to the cities or even other countries to find work. The rural immigrants are often not of the same ethnic group as those in power, which sets up the basis for discriminatory policies that disadvantage the many minority groups that are not affiliated with the government. These dynamics can fuel protest activities to overthrow the powerful elite. Various ideas have been proposed to help level the socioeconomic playing field. One of the more prominent options is implementing a democratic government, where most people have a stake in electing those that hold positions of leadership and power.

Broad patterns and dynamics of people and places are replicated throughout the Subsaharan realm. The regions share common demographic trends of large family sizes, agrarian lifestyles, and low-income levels. The patterns of an economy based on agricultural production, mineral extractive activities, and disruptive political leadership changes are common throughout the continent. Each region has diverse ethnic groups and an array of different languages. South of the African Transition Zone, the most common belief systems are Christian based and animist, while north of the zone, Islam is widespread. Division and civil unrest can occur where

the different religions meet and compete for political control. These concepts will bear repeating throughout the chapter. The cultural mosaic of Subsaharan Africa is vast and complex, and this chapter will outline the underlying trends and patterns with specific examples that will help place it all in perspective.

5.2 PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE REGION

African Transition Zone

The African Transition Zone divides North Africa from the rest of Africa because of climatic and cultural dynamics. Cultural conflicts and desertification are frequent in the zone. Dry, arid type B climates, common in the Sahara Desert, are dominant north of the zone. Tropical type A climates prevail south of the zone. Global climate changes continue to shape the continent. The shifting sands of the Sahara are slowly moving southward toward the tropics. Desertification in the zone continues as natural conditions and human activity place pressure on the region through overgrazing and the lack of precipitation. Type B climates resurface again south of the tropics in the southern latitudes. The Kalahari and Namib Deserts are located in Southern Africa, mainly in Botswana and Namibia countries.

Physical Landscape

For a continent as vast as Africa, Subsaharan Africa does not have extended mountain ranges comparable to those in North or South America, Europe, Asia, or Antarctica. There are, however, on the Ethiopian Highlands, the Ethiopian Plateau, that reaches as high as 15,000 feet in elevation. East Africa has several well-known volcanic peaks that are high in elevation. The tallest point in Africa, Mt. Kilimanjaro, in Tanzania near the border with Kenya, is 19,340 feet high. Nearby in Kenya, Mt. Kenya is 17,058 feet high. The Rwenzori Mountains on The Congo/Uganda border reach more than 16,000 feet in elevation and create a rain shadow effect. Permanent glaciers exist on these ranges even though they are near the equator. On the western side of the continent, Mt. Cameroon in Central Africa is more than 13,000 feet in elevation. South Africa's Cape Ranges are low-lying mountains no higher than about 6,000 feet. The continent of Africa consists of basins and plateaus without long mountain chains. The plateaus can range more than 1,000–2,500 feet in elevation. The only continuous feature is the eastern rift valleys that run along the tectonic plate boundaries from the Red Sea through to South Africa.

The main rivers of Africa include the Nile, Niger, Congo, and the Zambezi. The Nile River competes with the Amazon for the status as the longest river in the world; the White Nile branch begins in Lake Victoria in East Africa, and the Blue

Nile branch starts in Lake Tana in Ethiopia. The Niger flows through West Africa; its mouth is in Nigeria. The Congo River crosses the equator with a large tropical drainage basin that creates water flow second only to the Amazon in volume. The Zambezi River in the south is famous for the extensive Victoria Falls on the Zambia and Zimbabwe border. Victoria Falls is considered the largest waterfall in the world. Other significant rivers exist, such as the Orange River, which makes up part of the border between South Africa and Namibia.

There are several large lakes in Subsaharan Africa. The largest is Lake Victoria, which borders several East African countries and is considered the second largest lake in the world. Only Lake Superior in North America has a greater surface area. Several large lakes are located in the rift valleys of the east, and three of the largest lakes along the western rift are Lake Malawi, Lake Tanganyika, and Lake Albert. To the northeast of these in Kenya is Lake Turkana, which reaches to the Ethiopian border. Lake Chad is located in the African Transition Zone on the border between Chad, Mali, and Nigeria. Lake Chad has been severely reduced in size in recent years.

Climate

The equator runs through the center of Subsaharan Africa, providing tropical type A climates. These regions usually have

more rainfall, resulting in lighter, leached-out soils that may not be as productive as regions with more fertile volcanic soils, such as those found in the rift valleys. Root crops are conventional in Africa, as are millet and corn (maize). The savanna regions of the east and south have seasonal rains that affect the growing season. Soils in savanna areas are usually not as productive and cannot be depended on to fulfill the growing populations' agricultural needs. Savannas are usually grasslands or scrub forests with a seasonal precipitation pattern. Cattle and livestock grazing are common in savannas, and migrations are frequent to follow seasonal grazing conditions. In specific areas of Southern Africa, more extensive farming operations exist in type C climates. However, Sub-Saharan Africa is not blessed with the vast regions of fertile alluvial soils in the Northern Hemisphere. The ever-growing agrarian population has always depended on the land for food and sustenance, but these conditions are not favorable for Africa's future. Populations are growing faster than any increase in agricultural production.

Increasing populations in Sub-Saharan Africa are taxing the natural environment. Where the carrying capacity has been exceeded, the natural capital is being depleted at an unsustainable rate. Deforestation occurs in areas where firewood is in high demand, and trees are cut down faster than they can grow back. Expanding human populations are also encroaching on the natural biodiversity for which the African continent is renowned. Large game animals such as

rhinoceroses, elephants, and lions have been hunted or poached with devastating consequences. The creation of game preserves and national parks has stemmed this tide, but poaching remains a serious problem even in these protected areas. Gorilla and chimpanzee populations have also been stressed by human population growth. Humans are killing these animals for bushmeat, and human activities are reducing their habitats.

Poaching and Conservation

Droughts and Famine

Maps of the Region

The following story maps examine wildlife conservation, famine, sanitation, and civil war across the region.

Transcending Boundaries in Conservation

Managing Protected Areas

On the Front Line of Famine

Sanitation and Waterwaste in Africa

Nigeria in Crisis

Somalia in Crisis

5.3 HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE REGION

Kingdoms, Empires, and the Slave Trade

West Africa was home to several vast empires that shaped the culture and people of present-day Africa. Gold, salt, copper, and ivory were essential early trading commodities – mining and acquiring these items brought enormous wealth to the region. Slavery became a component in the warfare between groups, as the winner usually took the captives to serve as servants or slaves. The Ghana Empire (790–1076 CE) was responsible for one of the early consolidations of power in West Africa. Though its power and wealth were vast, it was only the first of several empires to arise.

After the Ghana Empire, the Mali Empire (1230–1600 CE) was known for its wealth and size. The empire held significant mining operations, including gold, copper, and salt. Expanding along the Niger River and the Atlantic coast, the Mali Empire extended over an area the size of Western

Europe. Initially a federation of local groups, the empire incorporated many smaller provinces or kingdoms and significantly influenced the region's laws and cultural heritage.

One of the indigenous states that evolved out of the Mali Empire was that of the Songhai people, who were located to the east of the central Mali Empire. The Songhai was based around Gao's city for centuries, and in the fifteenth century, they established the Songhai Empire, one of the largest empires in African history. Timbuktu's city became prominent during this period as an urban center, and its educational institutions became well known. In the end, the Songhai Empire was defeated by Moroccan Berber forces that splintered the empire into many smaller kingdoms and ethnic clans.

The South of the Niger River's empires were coastal kingdoms, including the Ashanti and the Dahomey, which flourished during the colonial era. The local African groups had to contend with the colonial European traders and invaders, which had superior weapons and different technology. Besides the mining resources of gold-copper, salt, and ivory, the slave trade was a driving force that attracted trade ships from various European countries.

The Ashanti Empire was located along the Atlantic coast in an inland region of what is now Ghana and Ivory Coast; this area served as a trading corridor where goods from the northern regions crossed to make their way to the coastal trading towns. The Ashanti Empire took advantage of the

trade opportunities and became wealthy. By the time the Europeans arrived, Ashanti trade relationships were well established and capable of supplying the colonial ships with slaves, ivory, and gold. The coastal area of Ghana was known as the Gold Coast during colonial times. Similarly, the country of Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire) got its name from its participation in the elephant ivory trade. The Ashanti were known for their involvement in the slave trade, and today must live with that legacy.

This region of West Africa bordering the Atlantic was called the Slave Coast because of the high number of local people from this area who were sold into the European slave trade and shipped to the Americas. The once-powerful Kingdom of Dahomey, east of the Ashanti Empire, was heavily involved in the slave trade. Slave trading with Europeans brought them rifles and other firearms that were useful in conflicts with their regional adversaries. A significant slave state along the Slave Coast, the kingdom attracted the spite of its neighbors as a pariah state for selling its war captives into transatlantic slavery rather than killing them, as was the custom in warfare. The Kingdom of Dahomey became the country of Benin after the colonial era.

The slave trade brought wealth to many of the slave-trading kingdoms on the African coast. The demand for slaves pushed many African kingdoms to expand their slave-trading activities, capturing more individuals whom they could sell to European slave traders. Millions of Africans were captured by

other Africans only to be sold into slavery, placed on ships, and sent to slave owners in the Americas. The total number sold into the Atlantic slave trade will never be known, but estimates range between ten and twelve million.

States and kingdoms existed throughout Subsaharan Africa. Ancient kingdoms flourished in the region that is now Ethiopia. East Africa's Axum Empire was an example of the powers of the early African savanna kingdoms located in the east. The struggles between Islam and Christianity divided the region and gave way to the African Transition Zone, which is the dividing line between the two religions. Ethiopia has retained its Christian heritage, while to the north and east, Islam has prevailed. South of the equator, the ruins of Great Zimbabwe, give testimony to the regional base of power that existed there in centuries past. The Zulu Empire thrived in the nineteenth century in the region that is now South Africa.

Colonialism in Subsaharan Africa

Throughout the world, humanity cannot escape the impact of European colonialism. Subsaharan Africa was broadly affected by colonial activities, the legacy that can be recognized to this day. Colonial powers of Europe ventured into Africa to claim colonies. Many African groups were instrumental in capturing and holding slaves to trade with the

European merchants. These groups still exist and have had to live with the fallout of their role in the supply side of the slave trade.

Only the Kingdom of Ethiopia and the area of Liberia, which was established as a home for freed slaves, remained independent. In 1884, Otto von Bismarck of Germany hosted the Berlin Conference, which, to a high degree, determined how Africa was colonized. This conference included fourteen colonial European countries and the United States, and its purpose was to divide Africa and agree on colonial boundary lines. Germany had few claims in Africa; Bismarck hoped to benefit by playing the other countries against each other. At the time, more than 80 percent of Africa remained free of colonial control. On a large map of Africa, claims were argued over, and boundary lines were drawn according to European agreements. By 1900, European colonial powers claimed most of Africa.

There was little regard for the concerns of local ethnic groups. Colonial boundaries divided close-knit communities into separate colonies, and ethnic boundaries were disregarded. Often-warring groups were placed together in the same colony. The Europeans, seeking profits from cheap labor and resources, did not consider the local people or culture and often employed brutal measures to subdue the local people. Most of the current borders in Africa are a result of the Berlin Conference, and many of the geopolitical issues that confront

Africa today can be traced back to this event specifically and to colonialism in general.

European colonialism remained active in Africa until the end of World War II, which left many European countries economically exhausted. In 1945, the United Nations (UN) was established. One of the primary UN objectives was to oversee the decolonization of European colonies. Still, colonialism in Subsaharan Africa lingered on. It was not until the 1990s that the last colony was finally freed. The transition from colony to the independent nation itself caused conflict. Civil wars were fought over who would control the country after the Europeans were pushed out. The transition to full independence has taken a heavy toll on African countries but has resulted in stronger political structures and greater democratic liberties in many cases. The first country to gain independence in Subsaharan Africa was Ghana in 1957.

During the era of independence after World War II, the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union enticed many of the African countries to support one or the other of the superpowers. The political pressure that divided African countries during the Cold War has persisted and caused some of the current political problems. The European countries extracted raw materials and minerals from their African colonies, as well as slave labor. Varying degrees of attention was given to education, medical care, or infrastructure development. The dependency that a colony had had on a European country for economic income in some

cases continued long after independence and may continue today. On the other hand, significant technology transfers from Europe to Africa infused greater efficiencies into Africa's economic activities. The imperial nature of colonialism and the divisive Cold War brought about, in an unfortunate manner, the benefits of structured governments and more critical democratic processes for many local areas.



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<https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/worldgeography/?p=376#oembed-1>

From Colonialism to Independence

The transition from European colony to the independent state has not necessarily been a civil transition for African countries; likewise, independent African countries have struggled to create stable governments or peaceful conditions, though stable governments and peaceful conditions have been established in some cases. In nearly all cases, removing the colonial powers from Africa was only half the battle toward

independence. The other half was establishing a functional, effective government.

Though each country has taken a slightly different path, most former colonies have endured civil unrest, conflict, or warfare to push for stable governments. Coups, fraudulent elections, military regimes, and corruption have plagued the leadership in several African countries. Civil unrest usually precedes a change in leadership when political power regularly changes hands by a military coup or an overthrow of the current leader.

The realm has had difficulty developing and maintaining effective political systems with democratic leadership. Political leaders have come and gone, many have been replaced before their terms were over, and a few have stayed long after their terms ended. When a leader is elected democratically, it is common to have widespread accusations of corruption, voter fraud, or ballot box scandals. Such government mismanagement and corruption have been common problems.

The vacuum left by retreating colonial powers at times has been filled by authoritarian dictators or by leaders who assumed control of the government and then proceeded to pillage and plunder the state for personal gain or the enrichment of their clan or political cronies. After the colonial era, new leaders were not uncommon to be connected to the old colonial power and adopt the European colonizer's language and business arrangements. This gave them an

advantage over their competitors and provided a means of income gained by the support of their former European colonial business partners, who often wanted to keep ties with their colonies to continue exploiting their resources for economic profits. Many of these leaders stayed in power because of military backing or authoritarian rule funded by the profits from selling minerals or resources to their former colonial masters.

A few countries are still struggling to bring about some order and unity, and despite all the negative issues, there have been democratic and relatively stable progressive governments in Africa that have emerged from the transition in recent years, which is a hopeful trend for the long term.

It is important to note that colonialism's objective was to connect a colony with the mother country, not to connect African countries. As a result, little cooperation occurs between African countries. Each country interacts more with its European colonial counterpart about trade, economics, and cultural dynamics. European colonialism has isolated African countries from neighboring countries and does not contribute to unity within or among African regions.

Colonial powers often built new port cities to extract goods and resources from their colonies and transportation systems from the new ports to the interior to collect the resources and bring them to the port. However, the colonial powers did not build a network of transportation systems that connected the region. Colonial powers were intent on continuing

dependence on the mother country so their colonies could be controlled and dominated.

The current wave of globalization based on corporate colonialism continues to encourage the same pattern of discouraging interaction between countries and instead encouraging trade with more economically powerful non-African countries. Most of the interaction between countries is a result of crisis or warfare, in which large numbers of refugees cross the border into neighboring countries for personal survival or security. To begin to work together and promote trade, common transportation, security, and industry, fifteen West African states came together in 1975 to create the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Since then, additional political and economic agreements have been signed by various African countries. In 2001, the more expansive African Union was created to help African states compete in the international marketplace.

Economic Geography

The demographic data for each country in each region of Sub-Saharan Africa indicate the region's human geography. Urban percentages, family size, income levels, and the other data that indicate the lifestyle or development level are acutely helpful in understanding the trends in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Index of Economic Development illustrates the dynamics

and conditions that exist in the realm. The data indicate the consistency of economic and development trends across Africa. However, the data does not indicate differences in cultural dynamics and uniqueness in how local people live. The interesting part of studying Subsaharan Africa is the many ethnic and cultural groups in each country that bring to the surface a wide array of global diversity in our human community. Within each country are microcosms of human societies that hold particular customs that maybe thousands of years old. Globalization and technological advancements challenge every cultural group to adapt and innovate to make a living yet provide continuity in their heritage. The remote cultural groups of Subsaharan Africa are most susceptible to globalization's volatile nature, which threatens their current way of life.

Subsaharan Africa is a peripheral world region with neocolonial economic patterns. Peripheral regions usually supply raw materials, food, and cheap labor to the core industrial countries. Most of the population in Subsaharan Africa works in subsistence agriculture to make a living and feed their families. Families are large. In recent decades, there has been enormous rural-to-urban migration to major cities, which are incredibly overcrowded. Subsaharan Africa has more than 750 million people, and most earn the US equivalent of only one to three dollars per day.

There is no single major core economic area in Subsaharan Africa. This realm has many core cities, and the rest is a

periphery. Many of the core cities are improving their technology and infrastructure and entering into the globalized economy. Even so, as much as 70 percent of the people still work in agriculture, leaving little time to develop a sizeable educated group of professionals to assist with social services and administrative responsibilities. The realm depends heavily on outside support for technical and financial assistance. Computers, medical equipment, and other high-tech goods are all imported. African states have formed trade agreements and have joined the African Union to assist each other in economic development and trade.

Subsaharan Africa has nearly forty urban areas of more than one million people. At the center of the central business districts (CBDs) are modern high-rise business offices well connected to the global economy. Outside the CBD are slums with no services and miserable, unsanitary conditions. The informal sector of the economy – that which is not regulated, controlled, or taxed – has become the primary system of doing business in most of the cities. The informal sector comprises trading, street markets, and any other business without financial records for cash transactions.

The lack of government regulation and control prevents taxes from being assessed or collected, which diminishes support for public services or infrastructure. The formal sector of the economy – that which the government can regulate, control, and tax – is forced to foot the bill to operate the government and support public services such as

education, security, and transportation. Despite the misery and unhealthy conditions of the slums where millions of people live, more migrants from the countryside continue to shift to the city in search of jobs and opportunities. African cities are growing rapidly, many without organized planning.

If the index of economic development were applied to Sub-Saharan Africa, a clear pattern would emerge. Rural areas would be in the lower stages of development, and only a few developing areas would be higher than stage 3. A large percentage of this realm would be in stage 1 or 2 of this model. Countries with higher living standards, such as South Africa or Botswana, would be working through stages 3 or 4. This region has one of the fastest-growing populations of the world and economically lags behind countries in the Northern Hemisphere, transitioning into the higher stages of the index of economic development.

Incomes, Urbanization, and Family Size

The socioeconomic data illustrate the conditions for people in Africa in comparison to the rest of the world. African countries are at the lowest end of the statistics for development prospects. However, the larger cities are showing promise for advancement into the higher stages of development. Family sizes in rural countries are some of the

largest in the world. The average fertility rate for much of Africa is about 5; in Mali and Niger, the rate is higher than 7. One-third to half of the populations of these countries are under the age of fifteen. Children make up most of the population in many areas, indicating that more substantial burdens are placed on women, meaning that women are not easily able to get an education or work outside the home.

The populations of West African countries are increasing rapidly and will double in about thirty years at the current rate. This trend places an extra burden on the economy and the environment. It is fueling one of the fastest rural-to-urban shifts in the world. West Africa is now only about 32 percent urban, and Burkina Faso and Niger are less than 20 percent urban, clear indications that agriculture is the largest sector of their economies and that most people live in rural areas small villages. Personal income levels in West African countries are among the lowest in the world; as far as standard of living is concerned, these are emerging countries. Few economic opportunities exist for the millions of young people entering the employment market.

The United Nations Human Development Index lists most of Sub-Saharan Africa in the lower levels of the development index. Sierra Leone has the lowest index in the world. Ghana and Senegal were the two countries listed in the medium range, while Senegal is the lowest in the medium category, just barely rising about the lowest tier. A country listed in the lowest tier of the medium category translates into

a region with low availability of opportunities and advantages. As a peripheral world region, the economic base is structured around agriculture with supportive extractive activities. Agricultural activities are renewable, but agricultural profit margins are slim. These countries are in a subsistence mode with a rapidly expanding population and few industrial or post-industrial activities to gain income.

Though most of Subsaharan African ranks low on the Human Development Index, most of the region is rich in cultural values, heritage, and natural resources such as precious metals and minerals. High levels of social interaction and community involvement bring about different cultural standards than those of a consumer society, which focuses more on the individual and less on community. Unless there is social unrest or open warfare, which does exist in various places, the people work hard to bring about a civil society based on family and tradition.

The population pyramids of Niger, Tanzania, and South Africa illustrate the population growth dynamics of Subsaharan Africa. Niger's population pyramid illustrates the large family size and rapid population growth. Tanzania's pyramid is similar but shows signs of slowing population growth. South Africa, which is more urbanized and industrialized, shows signs of declining family sizes and fewer children.

Languages in Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa covers a large land area more than 2.3 times the size of the United States. Thousands of ethnic groups are scattered throughout the realm. There is immense diversity within the 750 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa, and within each country are cultural and ethnic groups with their history, language, and religion. More than two thousand separate and distinct languages are spoken in all of Africa. More than a million people speak forty. Many local languages are not written down and have no historical record or dictionary. Local languages without a written history are usually the first to be lost as globalization affects the realm. Nigeria, with more than 130 million people, is the most populous country in Africa. It is about the size of Texas and Oklahoma combined, and the African Transition Zone cuts through the country's northern portion. More than five hundred separate languages are spoken in Nigeria alone. Three of the six dominant languages in Sub-Saharan Africa—spoken by at least ten million people or more—are spoken in Nigeria: Hausa, Yoruba, and Ibo. The three remaining significant languages of Sub-Saharan Africa are Swahili, Lingala, and Zulu.

Colonial activity changed much of how the African countries operated economically, socially, and politically.

Language is one aspect of culture that indicates a colonial relationship. Many African countries today speak a European language as the official language. Mauritania is the only country that has Arabic as its official language. Nigeria has English plus other local languages. The official languages of most of West Africa are French or English, and Guinea-Bissau's official language is Portuguese.

This vestige of colonial power would seem inconsistent with the desire to be free of foreign domination. However, because often dozens to hundreds of local languages are spoken within the country, choosing the colonial language as the official language produces less of an advantage for one group wishing to dominate the political arena with its local language and heritage.

For example, a language problem arises when a government needs to print material for the country. What language do they use? In Nigeria, there would be more than five hundred possible languages. What if the leadership used a language only spoken by a few people? The language of those in power would provide an advantage over those that could not understand it. What if there were more than five hundred separate languages in Texas and Oklahoma? How would they function? This is why many African countries have chosen a colonial language as their country's lingua franca or national language. Ghana, which is the size of Minnesota, has more than eighty spoken languages. Ghana and Nigeria have both chosen English as their national language to provide a

cohesive and inclusive method of addressing the language dilemma.

A portion of the two thousand languages spoken on the African continent will not survive. A small number speaks a large number of languages of local groups that may or may not have a written text or alphabet. The influence of globalization causes the country's lingua franca to overshadow local languages, which are relegated to the older generations that may not be fluent in the languages of global business and commerce. Young people often learn the lingua franca and may or may not pass their local language on to the next generation. This is how languages become extinct. Similar dynamics can be applied to local religious beliefs. Outside influence can often erode local beliefs and cause an evolution of religious tenets that eventually transform indigenous beliefs into patterns similar to the larger, more mainstream religions.

Religion in Subsaharan Africa

Before the monotheistic religions from the Middle East were in existence, the people of Africa followed traditional animist beliefs. The diffusion of Christianity and Islam to the African continent convinced many African people to abandon their animist beliefs. African religions spread with the slave trade and became a part of the African Diaspora. Examples can be

found in the Santeria religion in Cuba, Umbanda followers in Brazil, and Vodou (Voodoo) practitioners in Haiti. Many of these examples indicate a high rate of mixing between traditional religions and Christianity, which is not as well accepted within Islam.

The current religious trends in Africa follow the pattern of the African Transition Zone. Most of the population north of the zone follows Islam, and most of the population living south of the zone follows Christianity. Large percentages of people in the region follow a wide array of traditional or animist beliefs. For example, as of 2010, more than 50 percent of Togo people still followed local religions that were not affiliated with Christianity or Islam. Only about 29 percent of the population claimed to be Christian, and even fewer claimed to follow Islam (Central Intelligence Agency).

Along the African Transition Zone, followers of one religion will clash with followers of the other. Countries like Nigeria have a history of this type of social division, and Nigeria's government allows Islamic Sharia law to take precedence over civil law in the country's northern regions.

Both Islam and Christianity have been on the rise in Africa. As the local beliefs are replaced with monotheistic religions, there is more integration with either the West (Europe and America) or the Middle East. Religious activity through Christian missionaries or the advancement of Islam sometimes coincides with economic support being brought in

through the same channels, which is often welcome and enhances the global relationships that occur.

However, Africa is still full of traditional religions with rich spiritual histories. Spiritual forces are found in the environment. Deities of all kinds are worshipped throughout Africa. Christianity and Islam are latecomers to the region but have made deep inroads into the African culture. Both compete for the souls of the African people.

Ethnic Divisions and Civil Wars

Subsaharan Africa is home to thousands of ethnic or traditional groups. Each has a separate identity and history, and often one group conflicts with another. The slave trade and the establishment of colonial political boundaries or policies exacerbated historical, ethnic hostilities. Major civil wars have been fought throughout the history of Subsaharan Africa and continue at present. Central Africa has endured ongoing brutal conflict in the past decades, with more than five million people have died as a result of the civil war in the Congo (Zaire). Fighting continues between various factions over political control or control over natural resources, such as diamonds or gold. Civil wars are devastating to some African countries. Many other countries, such as Zimbabwe, Chad,

and the Central African Republic, have also suffered economic disintegration due to severe political unrest.

Rwanda's Tutsi-Hutu conflict has been historic in its violence and the senseless killing of innocent people. In 1994, the centuries-old conflict erupted into the violence of unprecedented proportions. Hutu militias took revenge on the Tutsis for years of suppression and massacred anyone who did not support the Hutu cause. Tutsi rebels finally gained strength, fought back, and defeated the Hutu militias. More than a million people were killed, and more than a million defeated Hutus fled as refugees to neighboring countries, where many died of cholera and dysentery in refugee camps.

The civil war in Rwanda and the many refugees it created destabilized the entire Central African region. The shift in population and the increase in military arms along the Zairian border resulted in an extensive civil war in The Congo (Zaire) that has resulted in the deaths of more than five million people, many by disease or starvation. Over three million deaths are estimated to have been related directly to the war and another two million by the harsh conditions in the region (AmericanRenaissance.com). The civil wars in The Congo from 1996 to 2003 changed the cultural and political landscapes and destroyed valuable infrastructure. One of the driving forces in these wars is the control of valuable mineral resources found in the Great Rift Valley along the eastern boundary of the Congo. Diamonds, gold, copper, zinc, and other minerals are abundant in this region, and wealth gained

from the mining of these products attracts political forces to compete for their control.

Civil wars have wreaked havoc on the countries of Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Somalia. All have experienced some amount of serious conflicts in the past decade. Many civil wars are not reported by the news media worldwide, even though the number of people affected, injured, and killed is deplorable. In places such as Ivory Coast, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe, the streets have become a battleground.

Creating stability in parts of Africa has been challenging, as civil unrest and political corruption continue in many African countries. The core industrialized countries have been hesitant to step in or invest in Africa's peace and stability. Governments of more than a few African countries have been unable to bring stability or to provide for their people. For example, Somalia has no central government; instead, it is ruled by warlords and village chiefs. Corruption, dictatorial rule, and military force have been significant components of government rule in these cases.

HIV and AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa

As if Sub-Saharan Africa did not have enough to work through to achieve stability, it must also cope with high numbers of people infected with HIV and AIDS. There is a line of

countries with some of the highest percentages of HIV-infected people in the world from South Africa to Kenya. HIV has infected more than 24 percent of adults in Botswana, and some villages have lost an entire generation of adults to AIDS. The AIDS pandemic has become a significant health crisis for Subsaharan Africa. According to the World Health Organization, as many as thirty million people in this realm are HIV-infected.

It is possible to live with HIV for years before dying of AIDS. HIV-infected individuals can pass the virus to others without knowing they have it, and millions of people die of AIDS in Subsaharan Africa without ever knowing they were infected. The lack of education, HIV testing, and medical services hinder progress toward stopping this deadly disease. Prevention is an ideal that has not materialized yet. Many people do not want to be tested out of fear of rejection by their families and friends if they are infected. AIDS will surely kill millions more in Africa before a solution is found.

Many other diseases are common in Subsaharan Africa. Mosquitoes spread illnesses such as malaria, ebola, and yellow fever, common throughout the realm. Sleeping sickness is spread by the tsetse fly, which can also infect cattle and livestock. Hepatitis is widespread. Schistosomiasis, tuberculosis, and typhoid are also prevalent. Unsanitary conditions and polluted water are breeding grounds for microbes that cause diseases. People living in less-than-sanitary conditions are more likely to come in contact with and

become infected with these diseases and are also less likely to obtain medical attention at an early stage of the disease.

Tourism Potential

Subsaharan Africa has great potential for the development of tourism. Tourism is considered a post-industrial activity with mixed-income opportunities. If Africa can manage its resources and provide a safe environment for travelers, tourism will have a substantial impact on Africa's economic growth and will play a significant role in its future.

Tourism is a growing sector of the global economy. Travel and tourism jobs are increasing worldwide. Africa attracts less than 5 percent of total world tourists and accounts for only a small percentage of international tourism income. Given the region's slim share of the tourism market and the expected dynamic growth of the sector worldwide, Africa can expect to increase its share of global tourism activity substantially.

Subsaharan Africa has a robust supply-side potential to attract tourists. Beach resorts alone create a big draw for tourists. The coastal waters of the Indian Ocean boast some of the most beautiful beaches in the world, with plenty of opportunities for sailing, diving, or other water sports. South Africa is proud of its secluded beaches and beautiful coastline. Other well-known coastal tourist destinations include Zanzibar-Tanzania, Benguerra Island in Mozambique, and

Seychelles. Other areas with tourism potential are the wildlife parks and game preserves. Cultural locations with a rich heritage of historical significance are growing in their attractiveness and accessibility for world travelers.

Every African country, urban center, or rural village is its unique tourism magnet. The tourism business, however, is broader than just the sites themselves. Considerations need to be made for transportation to and from the country and final destination. Hotels and guest accommodations, such as food services, restaurants, and the availability of other types of consumer goods, need to be considered. Services need to be available that link the various components of a trip, such as guide services in national parks or city bus tours. The attractiveness and competitiveness of each tourism destination will depend on the site's quality and accessibility.

Serious financial investment is needed to bring Subsaharan Africa up to par with the global marketplace. Africa has enormous potential for growth in its tourism market. Unfortunately, the same problems with tourism that will be discussed in the Caribbean chapter can be applied to Africa. There are many positive and negative aspects of tourism, and a trade-off is usually needed. Heavy tourism traffic might harm the environment, cultural stereotypes tend to be exploited, and the disparity between wealthy tourists and service workers earning a modest wage may lend itself to divisions and social friction.

Tourism demands higher levels of security and public

health at all levels. Money spent on tourism development is money not spent on schools or clinics. On the other hand, without tourism income, there are no jobs. Tourism brings to the surface both centrifugal and centripetal cultural forces. To be successful, Africa will need to balance the economic need for tourism with its willingness to comply with the tourism industry requirements.

5.4 WEST AFRICA

The region of West Africa includes the southern portion of the continent's bulge, which extends westward to the Atlantic Ocean. This region is bisected by the African Transition Zone, which borders the southern edge of the Sahara Desert. The main physical features include the Sahara Desert and the Niger River. The Cameroon Highlands is located on the eastern border between Nigeria and Cameroon. At 4,100 miles long, the Nile River is the longest, while the Congo River is Africa's second-longest at 2,922 miles. The Niger River is Africa's third-long river and extends over 2,600 miles from the Guinea Highlands through Mali, Niger, and Nigeria before reaching the Atlantic Ocean in the Gulf of Guinea.

Some geographers include the country of Chad or portions of it within the region of West Africa. In this textbook, Chad is listed with Central Africa. The portions of Chad located north of the African Transition Zone share similar characteristics with North Africa. Off the coast of Mauritania are the Cape Verde Islands, which are united as independent countries associated with Africa. Cape Verde was once a Portuguese colony but received its independence in 1975. Western Sahara has conflicted with Morocco over independence and is most

often associated with the region of North Africa because of the influence of Islam and because of its connection to Morocco.

The African Transition Zone cuts across the region of West Africa, indicating a division between Islam and Christianity and between the Sahara Desert and the tropics. This diversity in religion and climate is usually exhibited with a north/south division. Islam is the dominant religion on the north side of the African Transition Zone; Christianity is more dominant to the south. The two religions often clash in the areas where they meet. Traditional beliefs and animist religions are also practiced in the African Transition Zone.

Niger

The former French colony of Niger is landlocked, with the Sahara Desert making up its most substantial portion. Niger is a land of subsistence farmers, and most of the population lives in the southern regions. The country is less than 20 percent urban. Other economic activities include uranium mining, which is the country's main export. The world demand for uranium has not been strong in recent years. Oil exploration has begun, and international oil corporations have garnered drilling contracts.

The Sahara Desert is moving southward, and the agrarian culture at the base of Niger's society is often plagued by drought and famine. The Niger River flows through the

southwestern region and provides fresh water, but the northern region is mainly the Sahara Desert, and large portions are covered with dunes.

The country has extreme demographics. Niger has the highest fertility rate (7.6) in the world, and half the population is under the age of fifteen, causing a population explosion that taxes the sparse natural resources and brings even more poverty to a country at the bottom end of the index of economic development. Infant mortality rates in Niger have been the highest in the world.

The Sunni Muslim country has a rich cultural base but suffers from economic problems that appear to increase with population and desertification. The substantial national debt has hindered social services and has required a considerable amount of foreign aid from several sources. As a former colony, Niger, France, has been the main contributor to providing economic aid along with the United Nations (UN).

The political conditions in Niger are typical of the region. For the first thirty years after France's independence, the country was ruled by a single political party and military rule. There have been several coups, and various political leaders have been in power. A dispute remains with Libya over its northern border. Ethnic infighting with a minority Tuareg group has emerged in recent years, bringing conflict and discord. The Tuareg, found throughout northwest Africa in the interior Saharan region, has many ethnic clans and have been masters of camel caravans, often with a nomadic heritage.

Their clothing is often made of cloth colored with an indigo dye that distinguishes them from other ethnic groups. The Tuareg fought historical battles for an independent homeland against the French during the colonial era.

Mali

To the west of Niger is Mali, another landlocked Muslim country dominated by the Sahara Desert. Mali was home to various ancient empires. Wealth was historically gained from the mining of gold, salt, and copper. The Niger River flows through the southern region, providing transportation, fishing, and freshwater. The ancient city of Timbuktu, once a port on the Niger River, was a center of commerce and trade for the region and was used by the Tuareg as early as the tenth century. Timbuktu has played an essential role as an educational focal point for many of the region's peoples. The University of Timbuktu is noted for its educational activities and comprises various colleges and madrasas (Islamic schools of learning). At one point in its history, it claimed to hold the most extensive collection of books in Africa. The capital city of Mali is not Timbuktu but Bamako, which is located in the southwest. Timbuktu remains the leading tourist destination for the country and the region.

Mali shares similar political dynamics and demographics with Niger and the rest of the region; however, Mali now has

a stable democratic government with little political conflict. There are issues with the Taureg in the north and refugees from Ivory Coast in the south, but the country is quite stable politically despite the low standard of living and high population growth.

Mauritania

Islam and the Sahara Desert also dominate Mauritania. Niger, Mali, and Mauritania comprise the largest West African states and would cover the United States east of the Mississippi River. The term “state” refers to countries with independent governments. Mauritania’s access to the Atlantic coast provided a shipping connection to the rest of the world. For years the country fought over control of portions of Western Sahara but relinquished those areas in 1975.

Unfortunately, the political and economic problems that are common in the region are evident in Mauritania. In 1960, the country gained independence from the French, and several political coups and government changes occurred as a result. Interethnic conflicts exist between the African groups of the south and the Arab-Berber groups of the north.

Political unrest and economic hardships continue to add to the challenge of a growing population. Poverty, health care, and education have been significant issues that require

government support. Foreign aid has been critical to the operation of the country.

Large amounts of iron ore make up about 40 percent of the country's exports. Fishing off the coast has great potential but has been exploited by foreign fishing vessels; thus, Mauritania is in danger of losing revenues and a declining resource base if protection is not secured. Even though the country is mostly desert, most of the population works in subsistence agriculture.

Within specific communities in Mauritania, especially within the Arab Moor group, the concept of female beauty and prosperity was often associated with ample body size. Young girls were encouraged to eat high-fat foods in high quantities and, at times, were force-fed to put on weight. Being fat was an indication of wealth, and being thin was a sign of poverty and low esteem. This custom resulted in many women being considered overweight and obese by today's health standards. This trend is not as common today, though it still exists. Many Mauritanian women consider this old-fashioned, and natural eating habits are more the standard. Global views regarding women might be contributing to the country's current concept of beauty and health.

Senegal and the Gambia

The country of Senegal on the Atlantic coast surrounds the

independent country of the Gambia. Senegal was a French colony, while the Gambia was a British colony. The Gambia is an enclave of Senegal and extends on both sides of the Gambia River for about 186 miles. It is the smallest country in mainland Africa and is about the size of the US state of Connecticut. The two countries of Senegal and the Gambia were united into the confederation of Senegambia from 1982 to 1989 when it was dissolved. They have kept separate political identities ever since.

The capital of Senegal, Dakar, is located on the Cap-Vert Peninsula, the most extreme western extension of the African continent. Dakar was a main colonial port for French West Africa during colonial times. The French influence remains the common currency in the former French colonies in the West African CFA franc (Central African Franc), which has a fixed rate of the euro.

Guinea and Guinea-Bissau

Freeing itself from the grip of Portuguese colonial rule was a hard-fought battle for Guinea-Bissau, which became independent in 1974. The political upheaval that followed up to the present has resulted in various coups, military rule, leadership changes, and the assassination of their president in 2009. Without political stability, it is challenging to develop a growing economy. Graft, corruption, and civil war have

devastated the country's infrastructure and hindered its economic development, making it among the world's poorest nations. The country has to depend on outside aid to supply its basic needs.

The French colony of Guinea, which is larger than Guinea-Bissau, holds more promise due to its generous natural resource base, but Guinea has suffered the same types of political and economic disasters as its smaller neighbor. Though mineral resources are abundant, there is potential for increased agricultural production, where most people make their living. Guinea has a large amount of bauxite and other minerals, including diamonds and gold. The lack of infrastructure and political stability has discouraged investors from helping to develop these natural resources and converting them into national wealth.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone has been devastated in the past decades due to brutal civil war and political turmoil; thus, it was the lowest in the world on the human development index in 2010. There has been little political stability. Military factions have wreaked havoc on the country since it gained independence from Britain in the early 1960s. After independence, the country's contested elections and multiple coups resulted in a ban on all but one political party and established military rule. At

the core of the conflicts was competition for the diamond industry's control, which was also a primary factor in the civil war.

The abuses of power escalated to a breaking point in the late 1980s, which set the stage for a decade-long civil war in the 1990s. A group calling themselves the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) pushed to take control of the eastern diamond mining sector through terrorist tactics and brute force. Thousands of people died, and thousands more were mutilated by having their arms, legs, or other body parts cut off by machetes. Whole villages were destroyed, and the residents killed, tortured, or maimed.

The government fell under various military coups and eventually resorted to hiring mercenaries to help push back the RUF forces. By 1998 the whole country resembled a military camp with arms and ammunition being trafficked to all sides. There was a total breakdown in state structures and institutions. There were agreements between the sides in hopes that a stable government could emerge at various times, but the agreements broke down, and the country continued to scramble for civility. Nigerian forces were actively fighting in the conflict. In 2000, British troops were employed to help evacuate foreign nationals and establish order. Military forces from neighboring Guinea also entered the country to attack RUF bases.

UN forces with US support eventually established a sense of control of the country. By 2003, significant fighting was over,

and attempts were made to establish a civilian government. Approximately fifty thousand people were killed in this civil war, and as many as two million people were displaced, many of them refugees. Sierra Leone set up a special court to address crimes against humanity, and the country has been working to establish a stable government and maintain a sense of order.

The diamond trade still dominates, and political factions still vie for control. Much of the diamond mining is uncontrolled, allowing considerable smuggling operations to operate. After the civil war, revenues from diamond mining increased from less than \$10 million in 2000 to an estimated \$130 million in 2004. The civil war destroyed the country's infrastructure, and forces on one side or another looted most of the resources. The economy has had a difficult time recovering. Most of the people make their living in subsistence agriculture. Medicine, food, and goods have been in short supply. Many people have died due to the lack of these items during and after the civil war. Today the country struggles to recover and work toward stabilization.

Liberia

To fully understand where Liberia is today as a country and as a people, one must understand its background and geopolitical history. Liberia has a unique background in that it was not a European colony and was not included in the Berlin

Conference of 1884 as a country for grabs in the scramble for African territory. The conference of European colonial powers who divided up Africa did establish borders for most African countries. Liberia, which means “Land of the Free,” was a destination for freed slaves from the United States. In 1847, Liberia became an independent country patterned after the US government, even naming its capital Monrovia after President James Monroe, the fifth US president. Many of the freed slaves from the United States returned to Africa and relocated to Liberia. The slavery experience in the United States gave returning Africans a different culture and history from those indigenous to the African continent. The assimilation between the two groups was difficult. The division between the Americanized settler communities along the coast and the indigenous Africans’ interior continued to widen.

Centrifugal forces within the country surfaced in 1980 when a military-backed coup overthrew the government. This event became a turning point that escalated into social division and political unrest. Elections were held in 1985, which resulted in accusations of election fraud. Successive coups by various factions continued to plague the political arena. By 1989, civil war had commenced. Military forces from the neighboring countries of Ghana, Guinea, Senegal, and Nigeria entered the conflict. Whoever was in charge of the government had plenty of opposition from the various factions at any one time. By the name of Charles Taylor, a warlord became a significant player and eventually took control of the

government in 1997, following a bloody insurgency in the capital.

United States Marines were deployed to protect the US embassy and personnel. Nigerian military troops pushed into the conflict. By 2003, more than fifteen thousand UN peacekeeping soldiers were active in Liberia. The government's power was reduced to a minimum, and the warlord president Taylor was allowed asylum in Nigeria and was later brought before the UN court in The Hague for war crimes against humanity. In the end, more than two hundred thousand people were killed, and the country was devastated. With UN troops bringing stability, the 2005 presidential election brought Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, an economist with a Harvard degree. She became the first elected female head of state in Africa.

Poverty and the lack of goods and services have been a persistent problem for the people of Liberia. In an agrarian society, few global corporations have made investments because of the long-standing civil war. As was true for Sierra Leone and other African countries like Angola, the diamond trade helped fund the civil war. Diamonds from Sierra Leone had an estimated export value of more than \$300 million annually in 2010. Diamonds from these countries are often called blood diamonds because of their use as currency to fund death and destruction. The concept of blood diamonds originated in the civil war in Angola years earlier. The UN banned the export of blood diamonds from Liberia during the

war and finally lifted the ban in 2007. Looting and corruption by warlords and military forces pillaged the country's other resources, leaving most of the population with few opportunities and advantages.

Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire)

The former French colony of Ivory Coast is often referred to by its French name: Côte d'Ivoire. Before independence in 1960, Ivory Coast was one of France's most prosperous West African colonies. During the 1960s and 1970s, the economy grew, and cocoa beans production became the largest in the world. The nation's coffee production became the third highest in the world after Brazil and Colombia. Ivory Coast is the leading exporter of palm oil and pineapples in Africa. The potential for economic prosperity remains but has been diminished over the past two decades because of the economic downturn in commodity prices and political instability that resulted in a devastating civil war.

From 1960 to 1993, the country only had one political leader. Though this brought continuity to the government and the economy grew in the early years, authoritarian rule resulted in civil unrest and dissatisfaction with the country's conditions. Coups in 1999 and 2001 triggered the beginning of political division. Rebel leaders from the northern part of the country challenged the government's legitimacy and

pushed for land reform and a change in citizenship qualifications. Rebel groups took over the northern regions and vied for control over the prime cocoa-growing lands. Fighters under warlords and militias from Sierra Leone and Liberia encroached on the western sectors to gain a foothold. By 2003, French troops patrolled the western border region to provide security and stability. The country experimented with a unity government, but this broke down when the rebel groups failed to disarm. By 2007 the government and rebel leaders from the north worked out an agreement to reunite the country and dismantle the dividing zone between the north and south. French and UN troops remain to help implement the peace process.

The people of the Ivory Coast are highly diverse. Religious affiliations are evenly split between Muslims, Christians, and animists. The economic success in agricultural production and recent oil exploration has attracted people from neighboring countries seeking opportunities and advantages. After the 2007 political agreements, approximately 20 percent of the population was made up of immigrant workers from neighboring countries, predominantly Muslim. The small percentage of non-Africans are from France, Lebanon, Vietnam, and Spain. There are also a high number of missionaries from North American Protestant churches. Attacks against non-native-born citizens have occurred; qualification for citizenship is a significant concern, and

natural-born citizens often support stronger restrictions on nonnatives becoming citizens or holding political offices.

Ghana

Ghana, named after the former Ghana Empire, the Gold Coast region, was home to the Ashanti kingdom, which thrived on the slave trade. Many European colonial powers had sought to build fortified beachheads on the coast and profit from the lucrative trade in slaves, gold, and ivory. In the end, it was the British that dominated the region and established the Gold Coast colony. The push for independence came in 1957. Ghana was the first European colony to gain independence in Subsaharan Africa.

Ghana remains an emerging country, but it is endowed with natural resources. Even with half the population employed in agriculture, the country is experiencing positive economic growth. Gold and other mining operations contribute to the economy. Individual remittances and foreign aid remain a necessary component of the country's economic well being.

Kwame Nkrumah was the first prime minister and the first president. He advocated for a Pan-African concept that would pull the African countries together, oppose neocolonial activity, and increase trade and interaction within the African community. His ideas were welcome and are still celebrated, but his authoritarian rule brought about his downfall. In

1966, he was ousted in a military coup and exiled to Guinea. The political dynamics that followed were typical of the region: a pattern of corruption, coups, and authoritarian rule. It was not until 1981 that when Jerry Rawlings came to power, all political parties were banned, and a new constitution was introduced. By 1992, the political parties were reinstated, and the country began to experience political stability and democratic rule, which has endured to the present, making Ghana one of the most stable democracies in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Ghana is diverse in its people and its physical geography. The natural terrain ranges from coastal plains and interior hills to the large Volta basin in the center. The Volta River was dammed up to produce hydroelectric power, resulting in the world's largest artificial lake, Lake Volta, which covers a large portion of eastern Ghana. The cultural diversity is exemplified by many ethnic groups, more than eighty languages, and at least double that in the number of dialects spoken within the country. English is the official language and is used in all public education. Funding for education has been available, and the people have access to quality educational services and an increasing agenda of social services. Ghana is showing promise in providing its people with a stable and thriving prospect for growth and opportunities.

Burkina Faso

Upstream on the Volta River is the former French colony of Upper Volta, now called Burkina Faso. In 1960, the former French colony attained full independence, and its name was changed in 1984 to Burkina Faso, meaning “the country of honorable people.” Burkina Faso is a landlocked nation without a port city. The country lacks natural resources and industries, while subsistence agriculture is the main economic activity for roughly 90 percent of the population. Droughts and desertification continue because of overgrazing of the land and the natural southward shift of the Sahara Desert. Rainfall varies from forty inches in the south to only ten inches in the north.

Political unrest and a series of military coups after independence have not provided stability. The current president has been in power since 1987 and continues to win in presidential elections. New limits may restrict his term in office past 2015. Many people seek employment in the neighboring countries of the Ivory Coast and Ghana. This emerging nation occupies the second-to-last place on the UN’s human development index. At less than 25 percent, Burkina Faso has the lowest literacy rate in the world. The weak economy offers few resources to increase educational services.

Togo and Benin

Both Togo and Benin were French colonies at the time of independence. The Berlin Conference in 1884 accepted Germany's control over the coastal region that became Togoland in 1905. After World War I, Germany lost this colony, and the territory was administered between the British and the French. The French colony of Dahomey eventually became independent in 1960 and changed its name to the People's Republic of Benin in 1975.

Togo and Benin are both elongated countries with major port cities on the Gulf of Guinea along the Atlantic coast. Benin is about the same size in area as Liberia or the US state of Kentucky. Benin is twice the size in physical area as Togo. The south is a few degrees cooler than the north, where the scrub forests and grasslands of the savanna-type landscape can be arider, as it is closer to the African Transition Zone. A nature reserve and a national park in Benin's northern portion attract tourists to see big game animals such as elephants, lions, and hippos in their natural environment. Both countries have a weak economy, with most of the people working in agriculture. The political dynamics are similar to other West African states.

Nigeria

Africa's most populous country is Nigeria. The specific population has been challenging to determine, but 2010 estimates report the population to be just short of 150 million. This is a country of more than 250 different ethnic groups with twice that many separate languages or dialects. English is the official language, along with Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo (Ibo), all of which are spoken by ten million people. The different regions of the country illustrate the distribution of the major ethnic groups. Hausa groups are found mainly in the northern region, Kanuri groups in the northeast, Yoruba in the southwest, and Igbo (Ibo) in the southeast. The ethnic division has also caused serious confrontations and violence. In 1967, a separatist movement in the eastern Igbo region created the independent nation of Biafra. This sparked an all-out civil war that lasted more than two years and resulted in more than a million deaths. Political divisions did not end even after the two sides reconciled, and the country was united under the same government in 1970. Political instability in Nigeria has resulted in an almost endless number of military coups and government leaders being removed from office.

This country's size and diversity create a host of centrifugal forces that can bring about divisions along any number of cultural lines. Religious issues add to political instability. The north is mainly Muslim, as it is located in the African Transition Zone. The south is mainly Christian. A large

percentage of the population follows animist religions with many different traditional beliefs. Clashes have erupted in the streets that pit Muslims and Christians against each other. Several northern provinces have pushed to have the Sharia criminal code made into the area's civil law. There are regions where it is not uncommon for people to have a mix of Christian and animist beliefs.

Family size has been significant in Nigeria, which has caused an exploding population. Statistically, Nigeria has more people of African heritage than any other country in the world. The population density is equivalent to having half the United States population pushed into an area the size of Texas and Oklahoma. Most of the population makes their living on subsistence agriculture, but millions are employed in the growing urban service sector. Nigeria's main economic engine is the oil industry, which accounts for up to 80 percent of government revenues and is the number one export product. Nigeria is a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and is one of the world's top ten oil-exporting countries.

The lucrative oil business has attracted many seeking to share in the profits. The government's distribution of oil revenues has brought about even more infighting, corruption, and mismanagement within the political leadership. Rebels and militant groups along the Niger Delta, where most of the oil activity is located, have attacked the oil industry's infrastructure and taken workers hostage. They want a larger

share of the revenues to remain in Nigeria and go to their people, rather than the government or CEOs of international corporations.

Poverty, a low standard of living, the lack of opportunities and advantages, a weak educational system, or the lack of social services does not diminish the human spirit. Confronting all these issues and more, the people of West Africa and Nigeria are vibrant, energetic, and hard-working and value the institutions of family and religion. Just because they have not transitioned to a consumer society does not mean they cannot find fulfillment and happiness. A survey conducted by social scientists in 2001 and reported by BBC News in 2003, indicated that Nigeria had the highest percentage of happy people of any country in the world at that time. Each country's status may change from year to year, but the exciting part is that the survey confirmed that money or income level does not always equate to happiness. Countries like Nigeria, with a low level of per-capita income, can still highly value their heritage and the traditions that revolve around their family and community and transcend the global push for economic gain and the possession of consumer items. Much can be said for the vibrant cultural attributes of the people of West Africa and its developing countries.

5.5 CENTRAL AFRICA

Central African Republics

Central Africa covers a large physical area that can range from desert conditions to the north in Chad to tropical rain forests and mountains in the equatorial region of the Congo. The entire region is roughly the same size as the United States west of the Mississippi River. The countries included in the region vary with different organizations or geographic perspectives; in this textbook, the countries include Cameroon, Congo, Chad, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, the Congo (Zaire), Rwanda, and Burundi. Located off the west coast of Central Africa is the small twin-island country of São Tomé and Príncipe. Burundi and Rwanda are often included in the region of East Africa, but their connection to the Congo makes them more relevant to the Central African region for this textbook.

The equator runs through the middle of Central Africa. Type A climates are dominant in the region, complete with tropical rain forests and jungle environments. In the north is the African Transition Zone, which runs through Chad. In Chad, the arid region of the Sahara Desert transitions into the humid tropics. Central Africa usually only includes portions

of Subsaharan Africa south of the African Transition Zone. Southern Chad exhibits qualities similar to Central Africa, and the northern areas exhibit qualities similar to North Africa or the northern regions of Niger, Mali, or Mauritania.

The physical geography varies with each country in Central Africa. The most prominent physical landscape is the tropical rain forests of the equatorial region. Highlands can be found in both the western and eastern regions of Central Africa. The Cameroon Highlands is a geologic rift product in tectonic plates that created São Tomé and Príncipe, the island portion of Equatorial Guinea, and the mountainous portions of the mainland on the border between Nigeria and Cameroon. There are several volcanoes in Cameroon. The only currently active volcano and the highest in elevation is Mt. Cameroon, at more than thirteen thousand feet. Mt. Cameroon once emitted a cloud of carbon dioxide in 1986, killing more than 1,700 people. The volcano last erupted in 2000. In the crater of one of the volcanic peaks is Lake Nyos (Mount Cameroon).

Lake Chad in the north is a large, shallow water that lies on the border of Chad, Niger, Nigeria, and Cameroon. The size of Lake Chad varies widely because it expands and contracts with the seasonal variations in precipitation. Lake Chad provides water for local livestock and fishing for millions of people. Its location on the border of four countries has caused political infighting over local water rights, which are valuable commodities in such an arid climate. The average depth of Lake Chad ranges from five to thirty-five feet. Climatic

conditions and diversion of the lake for human purposes have caused the water to recede. If these conditions continue, the lake might virtually disappear by the end of the twenty-first century, which would have disastrous effects on the human population around the lake and the biodiversity. Waterfowl, crocodiles, fish, and a host of other creatures depend on Lake Chad for their survival, and its loss would create an environmental catastrophe.

On the eastern border of the Congo is a portion of the Great Rift Valley, which extends from Southern Africa in Mozambique to Lebanon in the Middle East. Lake Tanganyika and Lake Albert are two of the more mammoth lakes in Central Africa along the western section of the Great Rift Valley. Lake Tanganyika is more than 418 miles long and runs the entire boundary between the Congo and Tanzania. These are deepwater lakes. Lake Tanganyika is the world's second-deepest lake, with a depth of 4,800 feet. Because of its depth, it is also the world's second-largest lake by volume after Lake Baikal in Russia, which has the record for both volume and depth.

Fish and freshwater from Lake Tanganyika support millions of people who make their living directly from the lake's resources or live in the surrounding area. The Great Rift Valley is bordered by high mountains such as the Rwenzori Range and its highlands, including active volcanoes. Several volcanoes are located in the Congo, not far from the border with Rwanda. In 2002, Mt. Nyiragongo, a volcano with an

elevation of 11,358 feet in the eastern highlands of the Congo, experienced a series of eruptions that killed a few dozen destroyed thousands of buildings and caused the evacuation of as many as four hundred thousand people. Various volcanoes in this range have active lava lakes in their craters at their peaks.

At the heart of Central Africa are the massive Congo River and all its tributaries. It is the deepest river system in the world and has some stretches that run more than seven hundred feet deep, providing habitats for a wide range of organisms and fish species. The Congo River basin is second only to the size of the Amazon basin in South America. Home to Africa's largest tropical rain forest, this region is host to a massive variety of plant and animal species, which create an extensive environmental resource base. Human activity has been encroaching on this valuable environmental region filled with extensive biodiversity. Logging, slash-and-burn agriculture, and civil war have devastated large areas of the Congo basin, resulting in the loss of habitat for many tropical species.

Deforestation activities have been on the rise in Central Africa and the Congo Basin. Endangered primates and game animals have struggled to adjust to their shrinking habitat, causing a decline in their population. The endangered mountain gorillas in the northern region of the highlands have gained attention through professional scientists such as Dian Fossey, who have attempted to understand and preserve their ecosystems. Mountain gorillas have been dwindling in numbers because of poaching, civil war, and hunting. It will

take concerted preservation activities for gorillas to survive in their native habitat.

Conflicts and Unrest in Central Africa

The two landlocked countries of Chad and the Central African Republic have endured unstable conditions in their transitions to independent, stable democratic states. Chad had been in dispute with Libya over the Aozou Strip bordering their two countries, an area deemed rich in minerals and uranium, but in 1994, Chad was awarded sovereignty over the Aozou Strip by the United Nations (UN) International Court of Justice. Chad is a temporary home of more than 250,000 refugees from the ethnic cleansing campaign in the Darfur region of Sudan. Thousands more from the Central African Republic have sought refuge in Chad. Meanwhile, Chad's government has been plagued with corruption and mismanagement, a state of affairs that has hampered its efforts to offer humanitarian aid to its refugees.

Similarly, the Central African Republic is troubled by a history of unstable and short-lived democratic governments. Military coups and transitional governments are frequent. Civil unrest erupts into chaos. Rebel groups control large parts of the countryside. It is difficult for people to access reliable public services such as healthcare, education, and

transportation systems when the government is not functioning adequately.

Cameroon and Gabon

Cameroon and Gabon have more stable governments than Chad or the Central African Republic. Still, they are not without political issues. Cameroon was a German colony due to the Berlin Conference of 1884, where the colonial European countries divided up Africa. It remained so until after World War I when it was divided between the British and the French. Finally, in 1961, the two sides were merged into one country under one government. The two hundred or so different ethnic groups place pressure on the government to address social concerns. Even though the government has become more stable, social pressures between traditional groups and groups with a European colonial background have erupted into social unrest. The European Anglo factions have gone so far as to threaten to separate the once-British portion and secede from Cameroon.

Formerly a French colony, Gabon has transitioned to independence successfully. The country's small population of about 1.5 million people, along with adequate natural resources, has facilitated Gabon's development into a relatively stable democratic government and a higher standard of living. Gabon is geared toward attracting more foreign investments

and continues to progress forward in the index of economic development. As of 2010, Gabon was edging toward stage 3, the highest in Central Africa for a whole country.

Equatorial Guinea

Equatorial Guinea and the island nation of São Tomé and Príncipe are small countries on the west coast of Central Africa. Serious violence erupted in the former Spanish colony of Equatorial Guinea after it gained independence in 1968. The first elected president governed through authoritarian rule, and after a few years in office, he unleashed a reign of terror that resulted in the death of more than one-third of the population and neglected the country's public service sector and infrastructure. He was overthrown and executed by his successor, who then implemented authoritarian measures to ensure he would remain in power and continue to control all the revenues from the extensive oil activity in the offshore waters around his country. The billions in oil revenues have remained in the hands of the president and his family-controlled cabinet. Equatorial Guinea is Subsaharan Africa's third-largest oil exporter; however, most of the country's citizens have benefited little from the vast wealth of the lucrative oil industry.

The former Portuguese colony of São Tomé and Príncipe consists of two small islands off the coast of Gabon. The

islands received their independence in 1975, but that is when their problems in establishing a stable government began. Political turmoil delayed the arrival of democratic reforms for a decade. Elections for leadership were not held until 1991, and after the elections, leadership repeatedly changed because of political infighting. In 1995 and 2003, two coups were attempted without success. The democratic process has been complicated by offshore oil discovery, which has brought outside workers and media attention to the country. Multinational oil companies have begun to invest heavily in the development of oil production in the region.

Rwanda

Rwanda has been severely affected by the difficulties typically associated with the transition between colony and independent nation. Ethnic divisions manipulated by the colonial masters erupted to challenge the country's stability and future. The division between the Tutsis and the Hutus has deep historical roots. In 1994, the centuries-old conflict between the two ethnic groups erupted into the violence of unprecedented proportions and resulted in the senseless killing of hundreds of thousands of innocent people. The Hutus amassed large militias and took revenge on the Tutsis for years of oppression. Hutu militias rounded up and killed all Tutsis, moderates, and anyone not supporting the Hutu cause. The

killing of hundreds of thousands of people continued from city to city throughout the countryside. Within a few months, the genocide is estimated to have caused the death of as many as a million people.

The atrocities of the Rwandan genocide extended across the population. Men, women, and children were encouraged to kill their neighbors by hacking them to death with machetes. If they refused to comply, they were threatened with death. Victims were herded into schools and churches, where they were massacred, and the buildings would be burned to the ground. As people fled the region, the number of Tutsi refugees entering neighboring countries ballooned to more than a million.

Tutsi rebels finally gained strength, defeated the Hutu militias, and ended the slaughter. Fearing retribution for the more than one million Tutsis who had been massacred, more than a million defeated Hutus fled as refugees across the border into Uganda, Burundi, the Congo, and Uganda Tanzania. Refugee camps housing thousands of people; each was hastily constructed without proper sanitation or supplies of drinking water. Diseases such as cholera and dysentery swept through the camps and killed thousands of refugees. The country of Rwanda was left divided and devastated.

The aftermath of the genocide and conflict continues to incite civil unrest and political division in Rwanda. The search for common ground between the different ethnic groups is

divisive and conflict-ridden. Now Tutsi leaders dominate the Rwandan government.

The entire Central African region was devastated by the massive shifts of refugees and the brutal killing of so many people. The competition for the control of resources and the increase in military arms along the Zairian border became a significant component of the civil war that plagued the Congo (Zaire) during the same period. Up to five million people died in the Congo because of warfare, disease, and starvation. The wars in the Congo involved military actions by the Tutsis from the Rwandan and Ugandan governments and Hutu militias.

Burundi

The small country of Burundi also has been caught up in the conflicts in Rwanda and the Congo. Germany claimed the region of Burundi as a colony in the European scramble for Africa's resources. After World War I, they handed Burundi over to Belgium. Burundi and Rwanda were both parts of Belgium's African colonial empire and were together called Ruanda-Urundi. The two countries were later separated. Burundi achieved independence in 1962. Unfortunately, the ethnic conflict between the Hutus and the Tutsis that tore apart Rwanda in the genocidal war in 1994 had also plagued Burundi. In 1965, the military was controlled by Tutsi leadership. When the Hutus revolted, they were repressed. The

entire government came under Tutsi control. Hutu attacks in 1972 resulted in a systematic retaliation by the Tutsis that killed approximately 200,000 Hutus and forced another 150,000 to flee the country. Civil unrest between these two groups continues to plague the political and social structures of Burundi.

The Congos

The names of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (a former Belgian colony) and the Republic of the Congo (a former French colony) are confusing. At one point after they had become independent, both countries chose the name Republic of Congo. To keep them straight, they were commonly referred to by their respective capital cities—that is, Congo-Leopoldville (the larger eastern country, also known as Zaire) and Congo-Brazzaville (the smaller western country). The larger former Belgian colony has since become simply the Congo or is referred to unofficially as the Belgian Congo, and the smaller former French colony has become Congo. In 1966, Joseph Mobutu, the Congo's political leader, officially changed the nation's name to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 1971, the name was changed to the Republic of Zaire. In 1997, after a bitter civil war and the overthrow of Mobutu, the new president, Laurent Kabila, changed Zaire back to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, often referred

to as the Congo. To keep the two names separate, many refer to the Congo as Congo-Zaire.

The confusing name situation exemplifies the difficulties and changes in government leadership that have transpired in the two countries since colonial times. The former French colony to the west side of the Congo River has survived with fewer conflicts than its eastern neighbor but has not escaped the civil war. From 1997 to 1999, Congo had a harsh civil war, and the result was the overthrow of a democratically elected president and the installation of a former president. Tens of thousands are reported to have been killed. Related conflicts erupted in various regions that extended into 2003 before they were finally resolved.

The Congo's former Belgian colony is nearly as large as the United States east of the Mississippi River and is a challenge to govern. The population—distributed between about 250 different ethnic groups and about as many languages – was estimated at seventy million in 2010. Authoritarian rule from political leaders such as Mobutu from 1965 to 1997 polarized the country's many factions and played world leaders against each other. The Congo acted as a swing state in the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. As mentioned, Mobutu changed the name of the country and pillaged its finances for personal gain. He stashed away billions of dollars in public funds in foreign bank accounts that should have been spent on the country's people.

The two wars in The Congo has resulted in the highest

number of deaths since World War II. The First Congo War (1996 to 1997) occurred when President Mobutu was overthrown by militant forces led by rebel leader Kabila, who was a long-standing political opponent of Mobutu and was backed by Ugandan and Rwandan militant groups. Mobutu was eventually forced from office and fled the country. Kabila declared himself president and changed the country's official title from Zaire to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This transition in political power caused a shift in the militant rebel groups, which created the conditions for the Second Congo War (1998 to 2003), which was even more brutal than the first. The assassination of President Kabila in 2001 permitted his adopted son Joseph Kabila to take power and run the country up to the present.

The Second Congo War raged through the Congo, bringing destruction to the country and the deaths of millions of people. Besides political control of the country, the primary objective of the combatants was to dominate the country's resource-rich eastern sector, where valuable reserves of zinc, diamonds, copper, and gold can be found in the eastern region. Before the war ended, the surrounding countries of Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Uganda, and Rwanda had troops fighting on one side. The civil war formally ended in 2003 when rebel groups and the government worked out a shared political arrangement. Many rebel groups remained engaged in the eastern region of the Congo long after the agreement was reached. The total number of deaths resulting from the

Congo's civil wars was estimated in 2008 at about 5.4 million—the majority by the war and the remaining by disease or starvation (AmericanRenaissance.com).

Armed military conflicts in the Congo did not end with the Second Congo War. Conflicts continue in the eastern region. These armed confrontations are often referred to as the Kivu conflict because they occur in the provinces of North and South Kivu in the Congo's eastern region along the borders with Rwanda and Burundi. Rebels are fighting against forces from the Congo and Rwanda. As recently as 2009, fighting continued deep in the interior of Central Africa near the Rwandan border between various militias. Such conflicts are not widely reported by news outlets in core areas such as the United States.

People in the Congo are still dying because of the devastation of the war. Those not killed in actual warfare are dying of hunger and disease where food, medicine, and healthcare are not available. The death rate in 2008 was estimated to be as high as forty-five thousand people per month in the eastern and central regions—many of them children. Survivors of the bloody civil war report horrendous terrorist campaigns conducted by various militias that used mass rape, mutilation, and torture to control social pressure. The UN had more than eighteen thousand troops in the Congo as of 2007 to curb civil unrest and militant activities.

Understanding that most wars are fought over resources is a significant step in comprehending the conflicts in Central

Africa. The Congo conflicts are likely to continue because of the vast caches of mineral wealth in the country that have yet to be extracted. Economic pressure to control the extraction activities of saleable raw materials is often the driving force behind rebel groups such as the Congo. Local factions usually sell the raw materials for prices well below market value.

The sale of precious minerals such as cobalt, coltan, gold, and diamonds has helped fund the wars in the Congo. The country produces more cobalt ore than any other country in the world. Cobalt is a valued metal used in aircraft engines, medical implants, and high-performance batteries. The primary mining operations for cobalt ore are located in the southeastern Katanga state, where there are vast reserves of copper.

Coltan is a mineral that tantalum comes from, highly prized for its use in capacitors for electronic circuits. Tantalum is found in most modern electronic devices in high demand worldwide, from video game systems to cell phones. Most of the coltan in the world comes from mines in the Congo in the eastern Kiva regions. The eastern region is also home to a high percentage of the world's industrial diamond reserves. Other minerals and ores are also found in abundance in the region. The sale of precious gems and rare minerals can bring huge profits, but the wealth seldom reaches the hands of those that labor in the mines in the extraction process.

Learning about the geopolitics of Central Africa is critical to developing an understanding of how colonial activity gave

shape to Central African countries and why multinational corporations are now highly involved in creating the demand and markets for the resources found there. The world's core economic regions require the raw materials and resources extracted from peripheral places such as the Congo to fuel their economic activities and bring profits to their shareholders. The core economic players in the global markets are some of the largest arms manufacturers that sell weapons to the local factions involved in the battle to control the valuable resources. Globalization connects the core to the periphery. In resource-rich places such as the Congo, this relationship is only going to become more interactive.

5.6 EAST AFRICA

East Africa is a region that begins in Tanzania in the south and extends north through the vast grasslands and scrubs forest of the savannas of Kenya and Uganda and then across the highlands of Ethiopia, including the Great Rift Valley. The region comprises the countries of Somalia, Djibouti, and Eritrea, which are located in the African Transition Zone between North Africa and Subsaharan Africa. Rwanda and Burundi are physically in East Africa but are covered in the lesson about Central Africa because of their border activities with the Congo. The world's second-largest lake by surface area is Lake Victoria, which borders Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya. (Lake Superior, on the border between the United States and Canada, is considered the lake with the largest surface area.) Lake Victoria provides fish and freshwater for millions of people in the surrounding region. The White Nile starts at Lake Victoria and flows north to the Khartoum city in Sudan, where it converges with the Blue Nile to become the Nile River. The source of the Blue Nile is Lake Tana in the highlands of Ethiopia.

The highest mountain in Africa, Mt. Kilimanjaro (19,340 feet), is located in Tanzania near Kenya's border. The second highest peak, Mt. Kenya (17,058 feet), located just north of

the country's capital of Nairobi, near the equator, is the source of Kenya's name. Both mountains are inactive volcanoes and have permanent snow at their peaks. They provide fresh water, which flows down their mountainsides, to the surrounding areas. Mountain ranges in the Western Highlands of the Congo have a more significant effect on climate than these two massive peaks. For example, the Rwenzori Mountains on the Congo–Uganda border have permanent snow and glaciers and reach more than sixteen thousand feet. These ranges create a rain shadow effect that cuts off moisture for the region from the westerly equatorial winds.

This same effect is created by Ethiopia's highlands, which reach as high as fifteen thousand feet in elevation and restrict precipitation in areas to the east. The lower rainfall level transforms much of the region from tropical rain forest into a savanna-type landscape with few forests, more open grasslands, and sporadic trees. Dry desert-like conditions can be found in several places along the Great Rift Valley.

The Great Rift Valley

The Great Rift Valley provides evidence of a split in the African Plate, dividing it into two smaller tectonic plates: the Somalian Plate and the Nubian Plate. The Great Rift Valley in East Africa is divided into the Western Rift and the Eastern Rift. The Western Rift runs along the border with the Congo.

A series of deepwater lakes run along its valley. On the western edge of the Western Rift are the highlands with a series of high-elevation mountain ranges, including the Rwenzori Mountains, the highest in the series. The Virunga Mountains on the Congo–Uganda border are home to endangered mountain gorillas. The Western Rift includes a series of deepwater lakes, such as Lake Tanganyika, Lake Edward, and Lake Albert. Lake Victoria is located between the Western Rift and the Eastern Rift.

The Eastern Rift does not have deepwater lakes; instead, it is a wide valley or basin with shallow lakes that do not have outlets. The lakes have higher levels of sodium carbonate and mineral buildup because of a high rate of evaporation. The differences in water composition of the lakes along the Eastern Rift vary from freshwater to extremely alkaline. Alkaline water creates an ideal breeding ground for algae and other fish species, such as tilapia, which thrive in this environment. Millions of birds feed off the abundant supply of algae and fish. Birds attract other wildlife, which in turn creates a unique set of environmental ecosystems. The eastern edge of the Eastern Rift is home to the inactive volcanic peaks of Mt. Kilimanjaro and Mt. Kenya. Several other volcanic peaks are present in the Eastern Rift, such as Ol Doinyo Lengai, an active volcano.

The erosion patterns of the highlands have caused a buildup of sediments on the rift valley floor, creating a favorable environment for the preservation of biological remains,

including human and animal remains. Important fossils and bones of several hominid species have been found in the Great Rift Valley. One of the most famous finds came in 1974 when the nearly complete skeleton of an australopithecine nicknamed “Lucy.” Anthropologist Donald Johanson discovered Lucy. Noted anthropologists Richard and Mary Leakey have also done significant work in this region. Since the 1970s, hominids from about ten million years ago were discovered in the northern region of the Great Rift Valley. Discoveries at the thirty-mile-long Olduvai Gorge indicate that early hominid species might have lived in the region for millions of years.

Serengeti and Game Reserves

The Great Rift Valley and the surrounding savannas in Kenya and Tanzania are home to some of the largest game reserves in Africa, with a wide variety of big game animals. One of these large regions is the vast Serengeti Plain, located in northern Tanzania and southern Kenya. The governments of Tanzania and Kenya maintain national parks, national game reserves, and wildlife sanctuaries in their countries, most notably in the Serengeti Plain. Legal protection for as much as 80 percent of the Serengeti has been provided. The protections restrict hunting and commercial agriculture and provide protection

status for the wildlife. The word Serengeti means “Endless Plains.”

The Serengeti Plain is host to an extraordinary diversity of large mammals and fauna. The most massive migration of land animals in the world occurs in the Serengeti. Every fall and spring, as many as two million wildebeests, antelope, and other grazing animals migrate from the northern hills to the southern plains in search of grass and food. The Ngorongoro Conservation Area, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the Ngorongoro Crater are located on the border’s Tanzanian side. The enormous crater is the basin of an extinct volcano that has been transformed into a protected national park for the animals that graze on the grassy plains. This is a dry region because the Ngorongoro Highlands create a rain shadow for the area.

Dozens of other protected areas throughout Eastern Africa have been established to protect and sustain the valuable ecosystems for the large animals that have found their habitat encroached elsewhere by the ever-expanding human population. Kenya has more than fifty-five nationally protected areas that serve as parks, reserves, or sanctuaries for wildlife. The Amboseli National Reserve and Mt. Kenya National Park are two of the more well-known protected areas. The “big five” game animals are elephants, rhinoceroses, lions, leopards, and buffalo, and other unique animals found in the same ecosystems, translating into economic income from tourists from around the world that wish to experience this

type of environment. The national park systems in Uganda and Ethiopia have made provisions to provide sanctuaries for wildlife in areas where the human population is growing, and the political situation has not always been stable.

Tanzania

Germany gained control of the region of what is now Tanzania in their scramble for African territory in the late 1800s. Germany relinquished the colony to Britain after World War I. Off the coast of East Africa is the island of Zanzibar, which has been an island trading post for centuries and drew in shipping trade from the Middle East, India, and other parts of Africa. The spice trade attracted European ships throughout colonial times. During British occupation, the mainland region was called Tanganyika, named after the large lake on the eastern edge. In 1960, the colony gained independence from Great Britain, and four years later, Zanzibar and Tanganyika came together to form the country of Tanzania. Zanzibar remains a vital travel destination; major tourism infrastructure has been developed there. The coastal city of Dar es Salaam is the primate city of the country and acts as the capital. In 1996, Dodoma was declared the official capital. Dodoma is a type of forward capital because the declaration of Dodoma as the official capital was intended to move the political power inland, toward the country's center. The parliament meets in

Dodoma, but significant government offices remain in Dar es Salaam, making Dar es Salaam the de facto capital of the country.

Tanzania is an agricultural country; as much as 80 percent of the people make a living off the land. The rural nature of the population signifies that the country is at the lower end of the index of economic development with larger families and lower incomes. An emphasis on tourism is a growing trend in Tanzania. The government has stepped up efforts to expand the tourism sector of the economy. Oil and natural gas exploration have also been emphasized in hopes of raising the level of national wealth.

There are more than one hundred ethnic groups in Tanzania. Swahili, an indigenous language, is the lingua franca, and English is used in the higher legal courts and the universities for higher education. Swahili is a second language throughout much of East Africa and serves as a significant cultural connection between the many ethnic groups. Tanzania is unique in this aspect; an indigenous language (Swahili) was chosen as the lingua franca rather than the colonial language. Most people learn at least two or three languages, depending on their circumstances. The religious balance of Tanzania's population of more than forty million people is almost evenly split three ways between Christianity, Islam, and traditional religions.

Kenya

During colonial times, the British considered the land area now called Kenya to be a Crown protectorate area. Mombassa's coastal city has been an international shipping port for centuries and is now the busiest port in the region. Persian, Arab, Indian, and even Chinese ships made port in Mombassa during its earliest years to take part in the lucrative trade of slaves, ivory, and spices. Portugal sought early control of the trade center but eventually lost out to Britain. Arab and Middle Eastern shippers brought Islam to the region; Europeans brought Christianity. Hinduism and Sikhism from India found their way into the country with workers brought over by the British to help build a railroad to Uganda. Kenya gained independence in 1963 and has worked throughout the latter part of the twentieth century to establish a stable democratic government.

Nairobi, Kenya's capital, has become a central core urban area that serves the greater East African region as an economic hub for development and globalization. The largest city in the region, Nairobi, is an ever-expanding city that draws people from rural areas seeking opportunities and advantages. It also has become a destination for international corporations planning to expand business ventures into Africa. Kenya has experienced economic growth and decline as market prices and agricultural production have fluctuated. The Kenyan government has been working with the International

Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to support its economic reform initiatives and reduce waste and corruption in its fiscal processes. The countries of Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya developed the East African Community (EAC) as a trading bloc to support mutual development and economic partnerships.

Kenya has no one culture that identifies it. There are more than forty different ethnic groups in Kenya, each with unique cultural history and traditions. Of the many ethnic groups in Kenya, the Maasai have gained international attention and are often given broad exposure in tourism information. The Maasai are a small minority of Kenya's population but are known for wearing vivid attire and unique jewelry. Their historical lands have been the border region between Kenya and Tanzania. Cattle, a sign of wealth, have been at the center of Maasai traditions and culture and provide for their subsistence and livelihood. Tourism brings to the surface the diversity of cultures that coexist within Kenya's environmental attractions, and the country is working to enhance its international draw in the tourism marketplace.

Uganda

Uganda is a small, landlocked country on the northern shores of Lake Victoria. The Western Rift borders it on the west, forming both high mountains and deep lakes. Lakes Albert,

Edward, and George are three of the larger bodies of water. The Nile River flows out of Lake Victoria through Lake Kyoga and Lake Albert on its way north, providing an abundant freshwater supply and a transportation route. The Rwenzori Mountains and the Virunga Mountains shadow the country from the west. Mountain gorillas, an eastern gorilla subspecies, inhabit this region. They are incredibly endangered: only about seven hundred mountain gorillas live in Africa. One of the two central populations of gorillas lives in the Virunga Mountains national parks in Rwanda, Uganda, and the Congo. The other population is found only in a national park in Uganda. The lowland eastern gorilla population is also threatened; their population continues to decline. Poaching, habitat loss, disease, and warfare have devastated their populations in the past century.

Uganda is an emerging country and has experienced severe political and ethnic conflicts in recent decades. In 1971, the brutal dictator Idi Amin sought to rid the country of his opponents and many foreigners. He killed many of Uganda's people and destroyed the economy in the process. He was ousted in 1979 and lived in exile in Saudi Arabia until his death. Uganda conflicted with Sudan in the 1990s, during the bloody civil war in neighboring Rwanda. Uganda sided with the Tutsi groups in the region and has had to deal with the ethnic division within its borders. Uganda has many troops engaged in the conflict along the unstable border region of The Congo.

Uganda is an agrarian state with natural mineral wealth. The potential for added national wealth through mineral extraction exists, but there is no way to fund the extraction operations. Agriculture is the principal employment of Uganda's labor force, and most workers earn fewer than two dollars per day US equivalent. Coffee has been and continues to be the main export crop. Uganda is about the same size in terms of land area as the US state of Wyoming, but whereas Uganda has an estimated population of more than thirty-two million people, Wyoming has fewer than half a million. Population growth without economic growth places a massive strain on Uganda's natural resources.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia has the second largest population in Africa, with more than eighty-five million inhabitants; Nigeria has the largest population. The Europeans never colonized Ethiopia in the scramble for Africa, but during World War II, it suffered a brief occupation by Italy (1936–41). From 1930 to 1974, Emperor Haile Selassie ruled the country until he was deposed in a military coup. Many Rastafarians in Jamaica consider Selassie to be the second coming of Christ and a messiah for the African people. According to Rastafarian traditions, Ethiopia was the biblical Zion. After Selassie was deposed, the government shifted to a one-party Communist state.

Successive years in Ethiopia were filled with massive uprisings, bloody coups, and devastating droughts, which brought about massive refugee problems and civil unrest. Famine in the 1980s caused the deaths of more than a million people. The Communist element in Ethiopia diminished when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. The country's first multiparty elections were held in 1995.

The region of Eritrea had been a part of a federation with Ethiopia. In 1993, Eritrea declared independence, sparking a boundary war with Ethiopia that eventually concluded in a peace treaty and independence in 2000. The final boundary is still disputed. The breaking off of Eritrea left Ethiopia, a landlocked country with no port city.

The capital and largest city in Ethiopia is Addis Ababa, which is the center for various international organizations serving East Africa and Africa in general, such as the African Union and the United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Africa. This city is the hub of activity for the country and international aid for the region.

The Great Rift Valley bisects Ethiopia. Highlands dominate the northwest, and minor highlands exist southwest of the rift. The Ethiopian Plateau encompasses the Northwest Highlands and is home to Lake Tana, the source of the Blue Nile. Elevations on the Ethiopian Plateau average more than 5,000 feet, and the highest peak, Ras Dashan, reaches up to 14,928 feet. The climate includes sporadic rain in early spring. The typical rainy season extends from June to September, but the

rest of the year is usually dry. The highlands' high elevations cause a rain shadow effect in the deep valleys or basins on the dry side of the region. Eastern Ethiopia is arid, with desert-like conditions. The impact of overpopulation on the natural environment has been deforestation and higher rates of soil erosion; thus, continued loss of animal species is inevitable. Fortunately, Ethiopia has established natural parks and game reserves to protect wildlife and big game.

Ethiopia has been inhabited by different kingdoms and civilizations, giving rise to a rich heritage and many cultural traditions so that Ethiopia is home to eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites. More than 60 percent of the population claims Christianity as its belief system; about 30 percent of the population is Muslim. Many traditional religions prevail in rural areas. In contrast to other African countries, Christianity came to Ethiopia directly from the Middle East rather than from European colonizers or missionaries from Western countries. In Ethiopia, Christianity was structured into the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, a church that has endured centuries. Religious tradition claims that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has the lost Ark of the Covenant, which once rested in the holy of holies in the great temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. However, no direct evidence supports this claim. Ethiopia does not use the Gregorian calendar, which is the calendar used in most of the Western world; instead, Ethiopia uses a calendar based upon the calendar of the Coptic Christian Church, which is about eight years behind the

Gregorian calendar because of differences in how the year is calculated and in differences in the dating of the life of Jesus.

The large and growing population of Ethiopia is made up of an array of ethnic groups. The three largest ethnic groups are Oromo (35 percent), Amhara (27 percent), and Tigray (6 percent). Many minority ethnic groups make up the remaining 32 percent. The dominance of the Oromo, Amhara, and Tigray groups provides advantages for determining which language to use for primary education or community politics in a region. At least eighty-four separate local languages are spoken in Ethiopia. The lingua franca for higher education and everyday use is English. The tradition in many elementary schools is to use Amharic as the primary language for instruction, but this is breaking down as other languages increase in usage because of population increases.

Eritrea

Eritrea was an Italian colony before joining with Ethiopia in a federation in 1952. Since declaring independence in 1993, Eritrea has had a difficult time balancing positive economic growth with its border dispute with Ethiopia. The border war with Ethiopia drained this small, impoverished country of economic resources and destroyed valuable infrastructure. The agrarian culture and economic activities common in Africa also exist in Eritrea. Farming and raising livestock are the main

activities of as much as 80 percent of its citizens. The government has controlled almost every aspect of business and industry within its command economy structure. In 2008, in an attempt to attract business and connect with global markets, Massawa's port city opened a free-trade zone and had been attracting business connections. Multinational corporations are exploring mineral extraction, and various foreign governments have been working to establish stronger ties.

Eritrea is located north of the African Transition Zone. Most countries north of the African Transition Zone have an Islamic majority, but that is not necessarily the Eritrea case. Statistical data are challenging to confirm, but Christianity is believed to be as prominent as Islam in Eritrea. The main Christian denomination is the Eritrean Orthodox Church, with smaller percentages of Roman Catholics and Protestants. Most Muslims are Sunni. The government highly regulates religious activities and requires all churches to register with the state and provide personal information regarding its members. Members of religious groups not registered with the state may be subject to arrest or imprisonment for violation of this requirement. Examples of groups not approved by the Eritrea government as of 2010 include Baha'is and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Djibouti

The Bab el-Mandeb Strait, between the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea, separates Africa from Asia on the southwestern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. The strait is a narrow strategic chokepoint for international shipping transferring cargo from Europe to Asia through the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. On the African side of the strait is the small former French colony of Djibouti. Natural resources within the country are sparse. The republic depends on its relationship with countries such as the United States or its former colonizer to augment its financial status, keep the region stable, and protect valuable shipping in the nearby waterways. The United States has an important military base in Djibouti, the only significant US military base in Sub-Saharan Africa. The French also have a significant military base located in Djibouti. The significance of Djibouti's location means it is a critical place to monitor the war on terrorism and the incidences of piracy off the Horn of Africa. The main objective of having European and US military bases in Djibouti is to ensure the safe passage of oil tankers through the strait providing European countries and the United States with petroleum from the Persian Gulf states.

Like many other African countries transitioning from colonies to independent countries, Djibouti has experienced political infighting that has been detrimental to the country's economic situation. The government struggles with foreign debt and a lack of economic development opportunities. Most

of the population lives in the capital city of Djibouti, where the unemployment rate is exceptionally high. Its vital location is the country's primary asset, and foreign aid has been a significant part of its economic equation.

Somalia

The country presently called Somalia resisted the forces of European colonizers scrambling for African land in the 1800s. The various kingdoms and their influential leaders kept the colonial forces out well beyond World War I. Somalia's close vicinity to the Arabian Peninsula, and the prevalence of Arab trade provided a direct connection through which Islam was quickly diffused from Arabia to Africa. Political alliances were fused between the Somalian kingdoms and the Ottoman Empire. The leaders of the Horn of Africa used Islam as a centripetal force in uniting the people against outside forces.

It was not until 1920, as a direct result of the use of airplanes in warfare, that the northern region of Somaliland buckled under British colonial forces. Italy soon dominated the eastern and southern regions. Britain finally withdrew from British Somaliland in 1960. The country then joined with the Italian portions of the region to form a new nation, Somalia. An authoritarian socialist regime established power in 1969 and lasted until 1991. The socialist regime in Somalia initiated a territorial war in 1978 to gain back territory in the eastern

parts of Ethiopia's Ogaden region, which was once part of the various Somalian kingdoms. The war only intensified the divisions in the region. After 1991, the country descended into political chaos, economic turmoil, and factional fighting.

Northern clans who opposed the central government broke away in a move toward independence, and the old British Somaliland became the Republic of Somaliland in 1991. Somaliland operates independently from the rest of Somalia and prints its currency. The northeast region of the country, referred to as Puntland also broke away from the central government. Somaliland sought total independence, while Puntland was in favor of belonging to a national union but wanted to maintain autonomy. Both autonomous regions have their governments and are relatively stable, but they have had conflicts regarding the territory between them. Outside entities recognize neither as independent countries. Puntland's port of Bosaso has developed into a rapidly growing economic city and has expanded from fifty thousand to five hundred thousand people since 2000. Plans are in the works for a new airport and an economic free-trade zone, which should attract additional business and an influx of additional immigrants from other parts of Somalia and the region.

Southern Somalia has been broken down into regions ruled by warlords who have pillaged the country and control vital transportation links. A total government breakdown occurred in 1991, leading to a meltdown in all areas of society. Food distribution was hampered through pillaging and a lack of fuel

and structured transportation. Electrical power was lost, and clan warfare became the rule of law. A famine subsequently caused an estimated three hundred thousand deaths. The UN stepped in with food and peacekeeping troops, and in 1992, the United States dispatched marines in Operation Restore Hope, which stabilized the distribution of food but was unsuccessful in stabilizing the political situation and establishing a legitimate government. In 1993, nineteen US soldiers were killed in a battle in the capital, Mogadishu, after which the US withdrew its troops. The UN withdrew its peacekeeping troops in 1995.

Despite a lack of effective national governance, the informal economy in Somalia continues to thrive. Trading through personal transactions and the private marketplace continues to provide for the needs of the people. The primary sources of revenue are agricultural goods and livestock and money sent by people from outside the country to their families in Somalia. Banking and businesses have struggled to adapt to the continual conflicts, yet various hotels and service agencies continue to operate under the protection of private-security militias. Telecommunication firms continue to offer services with low calling rates for urban areas. The private sector heavily supports the educational system because of the collapse of the central government. Secondary education at the university level is struggling in the south but is more established in Puntland and Somaliland, where central authorities fund them. Income from piracy on the high seas

has brought millions to the private warlords that manage the operations. Stabilizing the country and showing economic progress will remain a difficult task for whoever leads Somalia.

Rural-to-Urban Shift

The average family size in East Africa is about 5.5, which is typical of Africa's entire continent and translates into exploding population growth. In many areas of Africa, East Africa, in particular, most of the population (as much as 80 percent) makes a living off the land in agricultural pursuits. Large families in rural areas create the conditions for the highest levels of a rural-to-urban shift of any continent in the world. The large cities—with expanding business operations complete with communication and transportation systems that link up with global activities—are an attractive draw for people seeking greater employment opportunities. In East Africa, each of the three largest cities—Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, and Addis Ababa—is more populous than Chicago, the third-largest US city. In West Africa, the city of Lagos, Nigeria, is more populous than the combination of New York City and Chicago. These cities are all riding the worldwide wave of globalization and are core centers of economic activity for the business sector and corporate enterprises.

The other regions of Africa all have central cities that act as economic core areas and attract the multitudes from rural

areas looking for employment and opportunities. International connections are indicative of local economic development, causing the urban areas to grow at exponential rates. Cities profoundly affected by a high level of rural-to-urban shift often cannot build infrastructure fast enough to keep up with demand. Self-constructed slums and squatter settlements, which lack essential public services such as electricity, sewage disposal, running water, or transportation systems, circle the cities. All the large cities of Africa are expanding at unsustainable rates. Traffic congestion, trash buildup, higher crime rates, health problems, and air pollution are typical results.

As of 2010, the US population was about 80 percent urban. This is the opposite of places like East Africa, where about 80 percent remains rural. In the next few decades, Africa could witness the growth of megacities that might continue to expand and grow for another century. For example, if the current rates continue, Ethiopia's population of eighty-five million people in 2010 will double to more than 160 million by 2040. Urban areas will continue to be target destinations for employment opportunities, whether they exist, and rural-to-urban shift will drive the populations of cities such as Addis Ababa to double, triple, or quadruple in size by 2020.

5.7 SOUTHERN AFRICA

The region of the African continent south of the Congo and Tanzania is named Southern Africa. The physical location is the large part of Africa to the south of the extensive Congo River basin. Southern Africa is home to several river systems; the Zambezi River is the most prominent. The Zambezi flows from the northwest corner of Zambia and western Angola to the Indian Ocean on Mozambique's coast. Along the way, the Zambezi River flows over the mighty Victoria Falls on the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe. Based on selected criteria, Victoria Falls is the largest waterfall globally and is a significant tourist attraction for the region.

Southern Africa includes both type B and type C climates. The Tropic of Capricorn runs straight through the middle of the region, indicating that the southern portion is outside the tropics. The Kalahari Desert, which lies mainly in Botswana, is a vast desert region with a dry mixture of grasslands and sand. When there is adequate rainfall, the grasslands provide excellent grazing for wildlife. Precipitation in the region varies from three to ten inches per year. The Kalahari is home to game reserves, national parks, and a variety of species. Large areas of dry salt pans stretch over ancient lake beds. The salt pans fill with water after heavy rainfall but are dry the

remainder of the year. The Namib Desert, found along the west coast of Namibia, receives little rainfall. Moderate type C climates are found south of the Kalahari Desert in South Africa, where conditions are suitable for a variety of agricultural activities, including fruit orchards and expanding wine industry.

Madagascar

Madagascar is located to the east of the continent in the Indian Ocean. Madagascar is the world's fourth-largest island and is similar in area to France. Surrounding Madagascar is the independent island states of the Seychelles, Comoros, and Mauritius. Madagascar is included as part of Southern Africa but does not share similar cultural geography or biodiversity. Madagascar geologically broke away from the mainland more than 160 million years ago and developed its environmental conditions and cultural heritage. Madagascar's early human inhabitants can trace their ancestry to the regions of Malaysia and Indonesia in Southeast Asia. People from the African mainland also joined the population. The whole island later came under the colonial domination of France but won its independence in 1960.

Madagascar's unique physical environment is home to many plants and animals found nowhere else in the world. At least thirty-three varieties of lemurs and many tropical bird

species and other organisms are found only in Madagascar. It is an area of high biodiversity and is home to about 5 percent of all the animals and plants in the world. Tropical rain forests can be found on the eastern edge on the windward side of the island. The western side of the island experiences a rain shadow effect because of the height of the central highlands, which reach as high as 9,435 feet. The western side of the island has a smaller population and receives less precipitation.

Since 1990, the eastern tropical rain forest has experienced a sharp decline because of extensive logging, slash-and-burn agriculture, mining operations, and drought. Population growth has placed a more substantial demand on the environment, which puts stress on the habitats of many of the unusual organisms that are unique to the island. Typical of many African nations, agriculture is Madagascar's main economic activity. About 80 percent of the twenty million people who live on the island earn their living off the land. Deforestation occurs in all parts of the island and is more severe in areas where human habitation leads to high demand for firewood used in cooking. In other parts of Africa, critical environmental areas have been protected or transformed into national parks and wildlife preserves. Though protected areas exist in Madagascar, efforts to protect the environment and the wildlife have been hampered by the lack of available funding and the population's high demand for natural resources.

The Southern African mainland countries share many of the demographic qualities of the rest of Africa: large family

size, agrarian economies, multiple ethnic groups, rural populations, political instability, and a high rate of rural-to-urban shift. Southern Africa is set apart from other Sub-Saharan African regions because of its mineral resources, including copper, diamonds, gold, zinc, chromium, platinum, manganese, iron ore, and coal. Countries in Southern Africa are quite large in physical area, except three smaller landlocked states: Lesotho, Swaziland, and Malawi. The larger countries – South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia, and Angola – all have extensive mineral deposits.

The vast mineral resources make this one of Africa's wealthiest regions with the most significant economic growth potential. A physical band of mineral resources in Southern Africa stretches from the fertile oil fields off the northwest coast of Angola, east through the diamond-mining region, and into the northern Copper Belt of Zambia. A region of rich mineral deposits continues from the unique geological formation called the Great Dyke in central Zimbabwe through the Bushveld basin into South Africa. It extends southwest through the central gold- and diamond-mining regions of South Africa toward the southern coast. Mining activity exists on both sides of the belt of mineral resources. Diamond mining is found in parts of Botswana and along the coast of Namibia. Coal can be found in central Mozambique. The countries that can conduct the necessary extractive processes create national wealth and increase the standard of living for their people.

Angola

The largest country in Southern Africa is Angola. Located on the west coast of the continent, the country includes the small exclave of Cabinda to the north, which borders the Congo River and is separated from Angola's main body. Cabinda is a significant oil producer and remains a foothold for rebel groups seeking greater control over oil resources. Offshore oil activity has increased in the northern region of Angola and has attracted international oil companies from many countries. In 2007, Angola was the largest oil exporter to China, which has become one of Angola's most significant financial supporters. Oil revenues have helped Angola rebuild after a bitter civil war (1975–2002) devastated the country and its infrastructure. Nevertheless, the country remains one of the world's poorest; life expectancies were a mere thirty-eight years in 2010. Angola is also burdened with thousands of refugees seeking safety from the civil wars in the Congo.

Angola was a Portuguese colony and fought hard for independence, which it received in 1975. After independence, strong factions clashed to obtain political power. At the same time, the Cold War was at a zenith. The United States and the Soviet Union used its influence to support political leadership in Angola and other parts of Africa to reflect their respective ideologies. Even Cuba had a large number of military troops in Angola in support of a socialist agenda. As the factions within Angola vied for power, the country was deeply divided.

Thus began a twenty-seven-year civil war that finally ended in 2002. The country has been working to recover from this turmoil ever since. Foreign aid and charitable organizations have helped feed the people, and oil revenues are beginning to support recovery. The government of Angola has suffered from severe corruption. Much of the wealth is centralized in the hands of an elite few and does not filter down to the general population.

Natural resources were a significant factor in the long, drawn-out civil war. Angola was one of the original countries in which the term blood diamonds was used. Resistant groups would mine the diamonds, sell them on the world market, and use that income to fund their military pursuits. Revenue from the clandestine diamond trade was fueled by the death and destruction of the newly independent country. Diamonds are still being mined in Angola and bringing in considerable national income. The industry is not always controlled or managed to lessen the number of diamonds reaching the market from unsubstantiated sources. Natural resources have helped the country look to a future in which a more stable government can rebuild its infrastructure and improve its people's standard of living.

Namibia

Namibia is a dry, arid land with few people. Its population

density of about 6.5 people per square mile in 2009 was the second-lowest in the world after Mongolia. The physical geography of this vast country is dominated by arid plateaus and desert regions, with elevations between them. The Namib Desert, characterized by enormous dunes, runs along the entire west coast. It meets up with the Great Escarpment, which is a sharp rise in elevation of as much as a mile high toward the interior. A central plateau dominates the north-south interior, and the Kalahari Desert is to the east. Natural resources are abundant: uranium and diamonds are the major export products, and lead, zinc, tin, silver, copper, and tungsten are also mined. The coastal waters support a substantial fishing industry. Namibia's constitution contains language that addresses environmental conservation and the protection of wildlife habitat. The country has created nature conservancies, which have advanced the activities of ecotourism, a source of national wealth promoted by the government.

The Berlin Conference of 1884, when the European colonial powers met to divide up Africa, resulted in the German colonization of the region of Namibia. The German influence remains evident in the dominant religion: most of the Christians in Namibia, which now comprise about 80 percent of the population, are Lutherans.

By 1920, the region known as South West Africa had been transferred to South Africa by the League of Nations. Southwest Africa had to endure the political policies of

apartheid while under the jurisdiction of South Africa. By 1966, local uprisings and a push for sovereignty resulted in a socialist independence movement that created the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). This organization was entrenched in a guerilla war with South Africa, which led to Namibia's return to the United Nations (UN) supervision. The name Namibia was adopted during this era. Socialist countries such as Cuba provided supported SWAPO's movement for autonomy.

The 1980s brought about a transition in the governing process in the Namibian War of Independence. In 1985, South Africa installed an interim government in Namibia. A UN peace plan was reached that included Namibia in 1988, and Namibia finally gained its independence in 1990 following South Africa's withdrawal from Angola in their civil war. SWAPO has become the dominant Namibian political affiliation. As a recently independent country, Namibia has had to work through a natural transition process to create a stable government to sustain itself as an independent country.

Zambia

The landlocked country of Zambia was known as Northern Rhodesia during colonial times. From 1891 to 1923, it was administered by Britain's South Africa Company. Then it became a colony of Great Britain. The name was changed to

Zambia when the country was granted independence in 1964. Lusaka is its primate city and capital.

Mining in the Copper Belt to the north provides both economic activity and employment opportunities for the people. However, long distances from major seaports and the fluctuation in world commodity prices do not provide a stable economic situation for the mining industry. Though most of the population makes their living by subsistence agriculture, the country has a large urbanized population that heavily depends on the mining industry for employment and economic support.

The country is expected to double in population in about thirty-five years if current rates continue. The average family size is more than five members. The larger towns and cities along the major transportation routes are the main population centers. Unemployment remains high in these urban areas; there are few opportunities for economic development. More than seventy ethnic groups can be found in Zambia, including a small but growing Chinese population. English is the official language, but many other languages are spoken. Most of the people are Christians with a wide variety of denominations. Animist and traditional beliefs are also common.

Malawi

Malawi is a landlocked nation that became independent in

1964. The British controlled the region in 1891 and named their colony Nyasaland after Lake Nyasa, a large lake in Malawi; the lake is also called Lake Malawi. The lake serves as the eastern border of the country. Another name for Lake Malawi is Calendar Lake, which is named because of its physical dimensions, which are 52 miles wide and 365 miles long. Lake Malawi is a deepwater lake with depths reaching 2,300 feet. The Great Rift Valley caused vast depths of the lake, which created the depression the lake rests in. The lake provides for the livelihoods for millions of people who live along its shores and depend on its resources of fish and freshwater.

Malawi is not a technologically developed country. Only about 15 percent of the population lives in urban areas. About 90 percent of the country's exports are agricultural products of tea, sugar, coffee, and tobacco. Malawi's government requires substantial assistance from the international community, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Complicating the situation are instances of government corruption that have led to the withholding of international aid. Another major problem for Malawi is the significant number of HIV-infected people. Also, family size is commonly large, and rapid population growth places an ever-increasing demand on natural resources.

Mozambique

Before colonial Europeans arrived in Mozambique region along Africa's east coast, the Bantu people of several ethnic subgroups were the dominant people, making up more than 99 percent of the population. Portugal had claimed the region as a colony as early as the sixteenth century. Portugal strongly resisted releasing its claims to Mozambique but did so after much opposition; it became independent in 1975. The transition from colony to the independent nation was a struggle for Mozambique. The rebel groups that had been instrumental in fighting a guerilla war for independence against Portugal remained active after 1975, and fighting continued after independence. The country fell into a violent civil war from 1977 to 1992, where Zimbabwe and South Africa influenced one side of the war and Marxist support from the Soviet Union. More than a million people died in this brutal war, which devastated the country, destroyed valuable infrastructure, and created more than a million refugees seeking sanctuary in neighboring countries. At the same time, most people of Portuguese descent left because of safety concerns. A peace agreement was finally reached in 1992. Since then, the country has had to struggle to create a stable government and provide a safe environment for its people.

Foreign aid has remained a necessity to provide economic stability for Mozambique. The agrarian society includes a high percentage of the population that lives below the poverty line.

Selective mining operations and the introduction of garment manufacturing augments the main agricultural activities. Since 2000, the government has worked to implement economic reforms and to curb excess spending. Both have had a positive effect on economic growth. It is not unusual for foreign debt to plague developing countries, and Mozambique has suffered from a high level of national debt that has threatened to bankrupt the country. Debt relief for Mozambique came through the IMF's debt forgiveness program; both debt forgiveness and loan rescheduling agreements were implemented. The positive growth pattern indicates that even desperately, emerging countries can work to improve their living standards if there are adequate resources and opportunities for employment. Still, rapid population growth potentially cancels economic gains and threatens to deplete valuable resources, thereby creating an even more difficult path for future stability.

Zimbabwe

There is no better way to understand Zimbabwe than to become familiar with the history and heritage of the people who live there. The Great Zimbabwe Kingdom flourished from about 1250 to 1450, when it was eclipsed by succeeding kingdoms. Ruins from the extensive stone architecture of that era remain and are a significant tourist attraction. These

kingdoms were urgent trading centers for the region but later clashed with the colonial powers that desired to dominate regional trade for themselves. The Bantu civilization of Southern Africa established several kingdoms that existed in Zimbabwe up to the colonial era.

Zimbabwe experienced similar colonial activity to that which befell Zambia, its neighbor to the north. Britain arrived in the late 1800s, and by 1923 they called their newly controlled colony Southern Rhodesia after Cecil Rhodes, who headed the British South Africa Company, a mercantile company that broke new ground in the region. The British were able to quell any resistance to their activity and consolidated their holdings. After Zambia became independent, Southern Rhodesia was renamed Rhodesia. In 1965, the white-dominated leadership of the Rhodesian government unilaterally declared independence, but Britain did not recognize this action. The UN issued sanctions against the white leadership; the response was an internal guerilla uprising to fight for free elections, including black Africans. Independence was finally granted in 1980, and the country's name was officially changed from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe.

In 1980, Robert Mugabe came to power as the first president and extended his authoritarian rule over the next three decades. During this time, the country experienced more than its fair share of civil unrest and political turmoil. Mugabe has been accused of corruption, election rigging, and pillaging of public funds for personal gain. Under his leadership, there

have been accusations of government mismanagement, human rights abuses, and hyperinflation of the country's currency. In 2008, inflation led to a severe devaluation of the currency. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe printed banknotes in the denomination of one hundred trillion dollars worth a few US dollars in the international exchange. The people continue to work through these difficult economic conditions.

Mugabe initiated a land reform policy that would take land owned by people of white European ancestry and redistribute it to people of black African ancestry. During the colonial era, white Europeans, who only made up a small percentage of the population, moved in and took control of most agricultural lands. Land reform was a progressive policy and was meant to provide a higher level of equality. However, the disorganized methods used to carry out the plan resulted in violence and the confiscation of farmland with little regard for the rule of law.

Thousands of white farmers and their families left the country. Some were killed when their farms were taken over by force. Mugabe was accused of corruption in ensuring his cronies benefited from the land reform without being concerned about the general population. The disruption in the agricultural sector resulted in a drastic reduction in agricultural output. The country shifted from a once sustainable, prosperous agricultural sector with extensive exports to an agricultural system in disarray. The result was food shortages and the loss of enormous agricultural export profits.

Shaping a stable post-Mugabe government will be a challenge for Zimbabwe. Solving the problems resulting from the transition from exploitive colonial rule to personal authoritarian rule will be an arduous undertaking. The country has serious economic problems that have lowered the number of opportunities and advantages for its people. Life expectancies have dropped from about sixty years in 1990 to fewer than forty years two decades later. Health care, education, and social services have not reached the level needed to sustain a healthy society by world standards. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has hit Zimbabwe hard, affecting a higher percentage of its population than most other African countries. Political turmoil, civil unrest, and violence have reduced law and order within the country. These issues are indicators that, within the globalization process, countries such as Zimbabwe will be losing out on the opportunity to attract foreign investments, manufacturing expansions, or employment opportunities being developed elsewhere to meet the demands of the marketplace.

Botswana

The country of Botswana is relatively flat, and the Kalahari Desert covers up to 70 percent of its land area. By the time it established independence from Britain in 1966, the lack of agricultural lands had reduced the country's economic level to

the lowest in the world. At that time, the country was called Bechuanaland.

Botswana has transitioned more smoothly than other African countries into a stable political system with a fast-growing economy. It has an emerging service sector, extensive diamond mining, and expanding industrial ambitions. Personal incomes are rising, and the standard of living is reaching upward to the second highest in the region after South Africa.

Botswana is fortunate to have had uninterrupted civilian political leadership for the decades following independence. This stable government has implemented progressive social policies and attracted significant capital investments to create one of Africa's most dynamic economies. Diamond mining has been the principal extraction activity dominating the country's export income. The stability of the country has enhanced the tourism market and created a growing ecotourism industry. The vast Kalahari Desert and the well-protected game reserves provide attractive tourist destinations.

Far from the fast-growing urban development of the big cities in Botswana, a dispute exists between the government of Botswana and the indigenous San people who live in the middle of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. The government has established programs to move the San from the reserve to other locations where they would become less nomadic and settle into a more agrarian lifestyle. According to the government position, this is to keep the natural habitat

and wildlife from being affected by human activity, thereby promoting tourism. However, the courts ruled against the forced move of the San out of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. Critics of the government program claim the real reason for the move is to clear the land of human habitation so the area can be developed for mining purposes. Estimates indicate that fewer than one hundred thousand San presently live in Southern Africa; about fifty-five thousand San live in Botswana.

Botswana's government has advanced one of Africa's most progressive and comprehensive programs for dealing with HIV/AIDS. Medical care, education, and social services are being strengthened. Botswana ranks at the top end in terms of the percentage of people infected with HIV/AIDS. This epidemic cuts across all levels of society and culture. The social stigma attached to being infected with HIV discourages individuals from being tested for the disease or seeking medical care. Addressing this epidemic is a challenge throughout Southern Africa.

South Africa

Anchoring Subsaharan Africa to the south is the dominant country of South Africa. Its large land area and vast mineral resources support a population of about fifty million people. The Cape of Good Hope on the southern tip of the continent

is a transition point from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian Ocean. Its strategic location was necessary for the control of shipping during the early colonial era before the Suez Canal provided a shortcut between Europe and Asia, bypassing most of Africa. The European colonial era first brought Dutch explorers to the Cape of Good Hope, where they established the city of Cape Town as a stopover and resupply outpost on their way to the rest of Asia.

South Africa is home to many indigenous ethnic groups and demonstrates the diverse pattern of human geography. The country has a history of both ethnic diversity and ethnic division, with the two largest African groups being the Xhosa and the Zulu. Colonial and neocolonial activities enhanced the European component of the ethnic mosaic. After the arrival of the first Dutch ships, other Europeans followed and competed with the African groups for land and control. The discovery of first diamonds and then gold prompted Britain's involvement in South Africa. The Boer Wars (1880–81 and 1899–1902) were fought between the Dutch-based Boers and Britain to control South Africa's mineral resources. South Africa became a British colony dominated by a white power structure. The Boers (later known as Afrikaners) spoke Afrikaans and were prominent in the South African political system.

Segregation first developed as an informal separation of the racial groups but evolved into the legally institutionalized policy of apartheid, which separated people into black, white, and "colored" (meaning mixed race) racial categories. A fourth

category was developed for people from Indian or Asian backgrounds. Apartheid eventually found its way into every aspect of South African culture. In the larger scale of society, access and separation were based on race. Each racial group had its beaches, buses, hospitals, schools, universities, and ore. The legal system divided the population according to race, with the white minority receiving every advantage. There were extensive and detailed rules for every aspect of daily activity, including which public restroom or drinking fountain could be used, which color an individual's telephone could be, and which park bench a person could sit on. The government also sanctioned separate homelands for people from different ethnic groups. People were physically removed from their homes and transported to their respective new homelands based on their racial or ethnic background. Apartheid's policy divided the country at that time and set up racial barriers that will take generations to overcome.

The controversial policy of apartheid in South Africa achieved international attention. Many countries condemned it and implemented economic sanctions and trade restrictions against South Africa. Opposition grew within the country and erupted into violence and social unrest. As a result, the white-dominated government of South Africa began to dismantle the apartheid system in the 1990s. The ban on political opposition parties, such as the African National Congress, was lifted, and after twenty-seven years in prison, Nelson Mandela was released from prison, where he had held for his resistance

activities. The apartheid legislation was repealed, and a new era began. Mandela was the first African elected president of South Africa in the new multiracial elections of 1994. His presidency, which ended in 1999, set the stage for a multiracial society. The country is still working through the ramifications of all those years of racial separation. As can be expected, the transition has not been without difficulty.

South Africa has large, modern cities such as Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Durban, each about the size of the US city of Chicago or larger. The cities of Pretoria, East Rand, and Port Elizabeth are major metropolitan areas and have more than one million people. These urban centers all contribute to and support the extensive mining and agricultural activities that provide national wealth. As the country that exports more diamonds than any other globally, South Africa has gained much national income from the extraction of mineral resources, which are being tapped by some of the most extensive mining operations on Earth.

Large parts of South Africa have a moderate climate and good soils, which combine to produce enormous quantities of agricultural products, both for domestic consumption and export profits. Mining and agriculture have provided extensive employment opportunities—opportunities that draw in migrants from neighboring countries that have experienced political unrest or poor economic conditions. These immigrants add to the cultural dynamics of an already ethnically diverse country.

South Africa's manufacturing sector is not well developed. The country depends on Europe, East Asia, and the United States, the three main core economic areas of the world, to provide postindustrial goods. There are few well-paying manufacturing jobs to provide for a growing or stable South African middle class.

The structure and dynamics of the current economic activities have brought about a two-tiered socioeconomic system. Most of the population may work in the mines, agricultural activities, or the service sector, but they do not directly benefit from the profits of their labor, other than earning a wage. These people find themselves in the more impoverished working-class majority of the population. The landowners, mining corporation executives, and social elite that control the service sector or are employed in activities such as banking or the commodity markets are receiving higher incomes and have created a wealthier upper class. Apartheid supported this class division. The current free and open legal system has yet to change the socioeconomic structure of the population. Millions of poor ethnic minorities find themselves living conditions similar to their economically depressed neighbors in other parts of Africa. At the same time, the wealthier upper class has established a good standard of living similar to that of the world's core economic areas.

South Africa redrew its internal provincial boundaries in 1994. The large former Cape Province in the south, which had been a former British center of power, was divided into three

smaller provinces. The large Transvaal Province in the north, which had been a center for Afrikaners, was divided into four smaller provinces. Orange Free State changed its name to Free State, and Natal Province changed its name to KwaZulu-Natal. The changes were made based on the country's size and political management that had come with the transfer of power when Mandela became president. The European colonial pattern of settlement was adjusted to represent a more South African pattern of political administration.

Swaziland and Lesotho

The two small landlocked enclaves of Lesotho and Swaziland are independent countries surrounded by South Africa. Mozambique borders Swaziland to the north. Under British occupation, the area of Lesotho was called Basutoland. Upon achieving independence in 1966, the area was renamed the Kingdom of Lesotho. The country is rather mountainous, and most of the land area is more than a mile in elevation. The Sotho people have a Bantu background and speak a Bantu language. More than 80 percent are Christian. Lesotho is the size of the US state of Maryland and has a population of more than two million people. The main economic activity has been based on agriculture, but a large percentage of income comes from remittances from Lesotho citizens who work in South Africa. Light manufacturing is beginning to emerge to

enhance the economy. Diamonds and other minerals have been found here.

Lesotho is a constitutional monarchy: a prime minister leads the government, but the king retains his ceremonial position. Reforming the country from a kingdom to a democratic-style government has not been without obstacles. The country has been subjected to political unrest, resulting in many years of military rule and violent internal conflicts. Lesotho is trying to stabilize its political situation and economy.

The Swazi Kingdom functioned under relative autonomy during colonial times, and Britain granted independence to Swaziland in 1968. The Swazi are a Bantu people who migrated into Southern Africa centuries ago with the Xhosas and Zulus. Swaziland has low mountains to the north with the grasslands and scrub forests of the savannas in the east and rain forests in the west. It is ruled by an absolute monarch, one of the last in the world. Political unrest has led to challenges to his rule. Reformers are pushing for modification of the government and some democratic reform elements, but reforms are slow in materializing. The small country of Swaziland is about the size of the US state of New Jersey. There are more than one million people, and one-third of the population is infected with HIV/AIDS.

5.8 SUMMARY

Subsaharan Africa has many rapidly expanding core cities and vast rural peripheral regions experiencing a high rural-to-urban shift. Most countries are former European colonies that are growing their economies as developing countries. The hundreds of tribal groups that live there with their languages and cultures often clash with each other or their government.

The informal sector is strong in this realm as people seek opportunities amid civil unrest and conflict. The weak formal sector in many countries does not always receive enough revenue from taxes or fees to operate the public sector and provide services. The realm has a high potential for economic development in the extraction of minerals as well as tourism.

West Africa has many countries with hundreds of separate ethnic groups with their languages. The high diversity makes it difficult for social unity and political cohesiveness. Located on the African Transition Zone, there is often conflict between the Muslim north and the Christian south. Civil wars in recent years have devastated various countries. Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with a growing diverse population. Despite its diversity and issues, Subsaharan Africa retains a sense of vibrancy in the celebration of family and community.

Central Africa covers a large region of tropical Africa, including the vast Congo River basin. Poor economic conditions have been partly due to the many civil wars and conflicts in the region where the controlling party or military power has received most of the wealth, leaving the majority in need of infrastructure improvements and public services.

The transition from colony to independent country has often resulted in short-lived, unstable governments that were often replaced with leaders who took advantage of their power to place large amounts of public funds in their foreign bank accounts. Such fraud and corruption have often left most people with fewer opportunities and little money left for public services.

The civil war in Rwanda, which was based on ethnicity, led to as many as a million deaths. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the civil war over the control of land and resources resulted in more than five million deaths, the most of any war since World War II. Hundreds of ethnic groups exist in an area that is being exploited for valuable mineral deposits.

Large deposits of gold, diamonds, and rare minerals such as coltan are located in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and surrounding areas. The wealth they can generate has fueled many armed conflicts by various groups that vie for these resources. Women have suffered serious setbacks in their rights and status in Central Africa because of these conflicts.

East Africa is dominated by the Great Rift Valley, with its large lakes, high mountains, and vast savanna plains. The

Serengeti and other game preserves are home to immense numbers of big game that are attractive for tourism. Most of the people work in agriculture. Diverse ethnic and religious groups exist here, and there is a high rural-to-urban shift in the population. Somalia is divided, with various significant factions controlling parts of the country.

Southern Africa, located on the Tropic of Capricorn, has moderate climates and extensive mineral deposits. The countries have a positive means to gain wealth from agriculture and minerals. There is a high diversity of tribal groups that have been impacted by colonial activity. South Africa had an apartheid system for years that finally broke down in the past few decades. Zimbabwe is an example of a country that has been devastated by dictatorial rule by one man for many years without democratic reforms.

Madagascar is a large island off the east coast and has different flora and fauna from the mainland because of isolation by tectonic activity. The island of Madagascar was once connected to the African continent but drifted away with the activity of the tectonic plates in that area. The biodiversity in Madagascar is jeopardized by the high deforestation that is destroying the habitat for rare animal species.

5.9 MAPPING AFRICA'S BOUNTY AND BORDERS

Explore reasons for European colonization in Africa and investigate the effects of colonial-imposed borders.

Learning Outcomes

- Identify the causes and effects of the Berlin Conference, 1884-1885.
- Evaluate the relationship between colonial-imposed borders and political stability.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
<https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/worldgeography/?p=390#h5p-15>

5.10 MAPPING AFRICAN INDEPENDENCE

Examine the relationship between methods used to gain independence within Africa and political stability.

Learning Outcomes

- Determine the chronology of African countries achieving independence.
- Compare the methods used to achieve independence within Africa after World War II.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
<https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/worldgeography/?p=866#h5p-17>

PART VI

NORTH AFRICA
AND SOUTHWEST
ASIA

6.1 IDENTIFYING THE REGION

The realm of North Africa and Southwest Asia is vast and expansive in terms of physical area, but its regions share several common qualities. This realm's physical area is divided into three regions: North Africa, Southwest Asia, and the countries of Turkestan. Alternative terms for the region of Central Asia were named after the Turkish people who moved through the area centuries ago (the geographic region of Central Asia). The countries in the North African region include the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea from Morocco to Sudan. The realm borders the Atlantic Ocean, the Sahara Desert, and the African Transition Zone. Egypt has territory in both Africa and Asia through its possession of the Sinai Peninsula. The second region, Southwest Asia, includes Turkey, Iran, the Middle East, and the Arabian Peninsula. The land on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea is frequently referred to as the Levant. The land area bordering the eastern Mediterranean Sea includes Israel, Lebanon, and parts of western Syria.

Moreover, it is often included as a part of the Middle East. Technically, the term the Middle East only includes the five countries of Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq, but in

everyday practice, the Middle East refers to all of Southwest Asia. Central Asia, also referred to as Turkestan, includes the “stan” countries from Kazakhstan to Afghanistan in the region between China and the Caspian Sea. The suffix stan, meaning “land of,” is a common suffix for country names in Central Asia. Afghanistan is the only country of Central Asia that was not officially a part of the former Soviet Union.

The Middle East is a European term that bridges the Near East (present-day Turkey) and the Far East (a European term for the regions of Asia, including India and China). The Middle East can also be defined as the area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf. Turkey, with its focal point of Istanbul, has been considered part of the Near East by Europeans. The famous Agatha Christie novel *Murder on the Orient Express* was about a train that traveled between Paris and Istanbul. The word orient refers to the east; occident refers to the west. Because Turkey was referred to as the Near East and India and China were the Far East, the region in between became the Middle East. This term is not entirely accurate but is widely used to refer to Southwest Asia.

Three small countries in the Caucasus Mountains – Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia – are affiliated with this realm through their geographic location and history. They are technically European countries and were once part of the former Soviet Union. The details of these countries are covered in Chapter 1, “Introduction to the World.” Turkey, which has territory in Europe and Asia, was historically

referred to as Asia Minor, the ancient region present-day Turkey. Because most of its landmass is in Asia, Turkey's portion that lies to the west of Istanbul is on the European continent, which connects Turkey with the European community. Cyprus is a small island in the eastern Mediterranean with ties to Turkey and a historical connection to the Middle East. Cyprus is technically a European country and is a member of the European Union.

Bordering both Iran and China is Afghanistan, a transitional country in the pages of history. Many empires have conquered it, and many groups have fought over its territory. Today, Afghanistan is a crucial country in the globalization process because of its substantial mineral reserves, yet it has a volatile and unstable political scene.

Sudan, a country geographically located in Africa, is included in this realm because it shares similar traits with the rest of the realm's three regions. Sudan could also be studied with East Africa. The African Transition Zone cuts across Sudan and extends through the widest part of the African continent. The African Transition Zone creates a boundary for the realms of North Africa and Southwest Asia dividing the Islamic influence to the north from the Christian influence to the south. It is also a transitional boundary between the dry and arid type B climates and the more tropical type A climates of Equatorial Africa. The countries on the eastern end of the African Transition Zone – including Eritrea, Somalia, and Ethiopia – are often covered with this

realm in other contexts. However, in this textbook, the critical information was included in the section on East Africa. The African Transition Zone can be volatile, with the potential for ethnic, cultural, or political conflicts.

6.2 PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE REGION

The countries of the realm share some key physical geography traits that influence all other human activities. The first critical common trait relates to the climate of the region. Various climate types can be found in this realm; it is the dry or arid type B climate that dominates and covers most physical areas. Other climate types include the type H highland climate (cold temperatures at the high elevations with moderate temperatures at the bases) of the mountains of the Maghreb, Iran, or Central Asia and the more moderate type C climate in the coastal regions bordering the sea. The type C climate along the coastal Mediterranean area attracts human development and is home to many large port cities. The overall fact is that those vast areas of each region are an uninhabited desert. North Africa has the largest desert in the world – the Sahara – which borders the Libyan Desert and the Nubian Desert. About one-third of the Arabian Peninsula is part of the Empty Quarter of the Rub’ al Khali (Arabian Desert). Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan have vast regions of the desert with few inhabitants. This aspect of the

realm reveals the importance of water as a valuable natural resource. Most people in the realm are more dependent on the availability of water than oil.

The other factor that all three regions of the realm share are the availability of significant natural resources. North Africa, Southwest Asia, and Turkestan all have significant reserves of oil, natural gas, and essential minerals. It stands to reason that not every country has the same reserves and that some countries have very few or none at all. However, in terms of how the countries gain national wealth, the export of oil has dominated economic activity related to the global community. This realm is peripheral. The resource that the realm can offer to the world's core economic regions is the energy to fuel their economies and maintain their high standard of living. Enormous economic profits from the sale of these resources have traditionally been held in the hands of the elite ruling leader or his clan, and do not always filter down to most of the population. The control of and profits from natural resources have become the countries' primary objectives; this fuels conflicts and armed military interventions in areas such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

Access to Fresh Water

Water is one of the necessities for human existence, and human settlements have long been based on the availability of

water for human consumption and agriculture, navigation, and the production of energy. In North Africa and Southwest Asia, water availability is of even greater relevance because of the dominant type B climate. Methods used to address the shortage of water or access freshwater have been nearly as diverse as those living here. Large populations of people can be found wherever there is fresh water. Water has historically been transferred from source to destination through canals, aqueducts, or select channels. Many ruins of extensive aqueducts from Roman times and earlier remain throughout the realm. The issues associated with water use continue to affect the lives of the people of this realm. Rapid population growth and industrialization have intensified the demand for freshwater.

Water can be found in the desert regions in a range of forms. For example, there are oases, springs, or noted wells from which people can draw underground water close to the surface. Mountainous regions such as the Atlas Mountains in North Africa or the Elburz Mountains in Iran trap moisture, which produces higher quantities of precipitation. The precipitation is then available in the valleys to irrigate crops. Discovering or developing other methods of acquiring freshwater is a requirement in areas without mountains.

Underground Water in Libya

In the Sahara region, Libya draws water from deep

underground wells that tap into the vast aquifers beneath the desert that were charged with water when the region was tropical thousands of years ago. The water is referred to as fossil water. Extensive systems of canals and pipelines have been developed in Libya to extract fossil water and use it for agricultural production or urban purposes. The human-made river project, one of the largest of its kind, has drawn fresh water from the desert to large cities like Tripoli and Benghazi. The local drinking water in Benghazi is contaminated by saltwater intrusion from the Mediterranean. Underground aquifers are underneath political boundaries, so the allocation and control of water are matters of political debate that can lead to military conflict. The project's potential duration will be how quickly the water is used and how many people use the aquifer system. The main problem with this system is that underground aquifers are not considered a renewable resource; as more countries tap into the aquifers, the available water will be depleted more quickly. As water is drawn from the aquifers for industrial irrigation, the water table goes down. Local settlements that rely on well water may, in time, have to dig deeper wells or move to locations where water resources are still available.

Nile Water in Egypt

Egypt draws water from the Nile to irrigate fields for extensive food production. For thousands of years, floods of the Nile

annually covered the land with fresh silt and water. This made the land productive, but the flooding often caused severe damage to human infrastructure. The building of the Aswan High Dam in the 1970s helped control the flooding of the Nile Valley. The river no longer flooded annually, and water had to be pumped onto the land. Over time, the constant and extensive use of this type of irrigation causes the small quantities of salt in the water to build up in the soil to severe levels, thereby reducing the land's productivity. This process, called salinization, is a common problem in arid climates. To rid the salts' soil, freshwater is needed to flood the fields, dissolving the salt and then moving the salty water back off the fields. High salinization in the soil and the reduction in agricultural productivity is a growing concern for Egypt. Egypt's growing population places a high demand on the availability of food. More than half of the eighty million people in Egypt live in rural areas, and many of them make their living in agriculture, growing food that plays a critical role in the country's economic stability.

Water from the Tigris and Euphrates

The primary source of water in the Fertile Crescent region comes from the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Both have their origins in Turkey and converge at the Shatt al-Arab waterway that flows into the Persian Gulf. The Euphrates is the longest river in Southwest Asia and flows through Syria from Turkey

before entering into Iraq. Turkey had developed large dams on both the Tigris and Euphrates for agricultural purposes and hydroelectric power. As water is diverted for agriculture in Turkey, there is less water flowing downstream for Syria or Iraq.

Disputes over water resources continue to be a significant concern in the Tigris-Euphrates Basin. The Atatürk Dam in Turkey is the largest dam on the Euphrates, and it has a reservoir behind the dam that is large enough to hold the total annual discharge of the river. All three countries have dams on the Euphrates, and both Turkey and Iraq have dams on the Tigris. The three countries signed a memorandum of understanding in 2009 to strengthen cooperation within the Tigris-Euphrates Basin. All three countries need water for agriculture to produce food for a growing population. Agreements to share water have been challenging due to the Iraq War and the recent protests and demonstrations in Syria that have contributed to further political tension between the three countries.

Water Conservation in Israel

Israel has taken innovative steps to conserve water and use it efficiently. Drip irrigation mixed with fertilizers is called fertigation. Fertigation is used extensively in the area. Israel grows plantation crops such as bananas, which require large quantities of water. Banana groves are covered with a material

that allows sunlight to penetrate but reduces the amount of transpiration, conserving water. Israel has worked on recycling water whenever possible. Gray water is water extracted from sewage that has been treated to be used in agriculture.

Underground wells in the West Bank region provide water for a high percentage of people in the Palestinian areas and Israel. The issue of control over the water is contentious at times.

Just as water control may have been an essential factor in the early Mesopotamian civilizations, it remains a point of political conflict in places like Israel and the West Bank. The lack of freshwater and the more substantial demand placed on water resources have caused countries to afford it to desalinize seawater. This process is used extensively in the oil-rich states of the Arabian Peninsula. Israel is implementing a similar plan to accommodate its increasing population and freshwater requirements.

Mountain Water in Iran

Iran is mostly a desert climate; thus, most countries do not receive copious amounts of precipitation. To redistribute the water available from the high mountains, Iranians have developed a system of qanats to collect water where it is available and channel it to the cities or urban areas for use. A qanat might include a system of shafts or wells along a mountain slope that allows water to collect into a common underground channel, diverted to wherever it is needed. This

system has been in use since ancient times in many arid regions of the realm and around the world. More than 2,700 years ago, a qanat was developed in what is present-day Iran. The qanat has a system of hundreds of wells and channels water for more than twenty-eight miles; it still provides drinking water to more than forty thousand people in the city of Gonabad. Thousands of qanats were developed over the centuries in this area. Persians used cold qanat water from the mountains to keep ice cool during the summer months. Agricultural production relies heavily on water from qanats, which depends on climate conditions and local weather patterns.

Water Shortages in Arabia

The Arabian Peninsula almost always conjures up images of desert conditions; contrary to that image, there is water in the peninsula. Underground aquifers of fossil water are located beneath the sands similar to that in the Sahara Desert. Saudi Arabia taps into these water resources to irrigate agricultural land to grow food. This area faces the same issue as Libya and other areas of the world that rely on underground aquifers: eventually, the water supply will be used. The majority of the Arabian Peninsula is desert, and water is always in short supply. Many coastal desert countries such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, and Qatar have resorted to the

desalinization of seawater for their needs, but this is viable only as long as the country can afford the energy cost required to operate the desalinization plants.

Yemen is a state on the Arabian Peninsula that is mountainous and has used terracing to benefit from what little precipitation they receive more effectively. Water from precipitation is trapped in terraces, and as it flows down the mountainside, each terrace uses what it needs and then passes the water to the next lower terrace. More extensive ranges of land can be farmed to produce higher yields of crops such as sorghum and cereals. One of the main problems with Yemen's terrace system is that most trees are being cut down for firewood. Tree roots are essential for holding the soil together on the fragile mountain slopes. Another problem is heavy rains that cause severe erosion and damage to the terrace system. Additionally, the extremely rapid growth rate of Yemen's population is outstripping its agricultural production.

Division of Water in Turkestan

Freshwater is in short supply in many of the desert regions of Turkestan in Central Asia. Agricultural production has traditionally been dependent on water flowing in rivers and streams that originated with the precipitation from the mountains, but as humans have developed canals and irrigation systems, water from rivers has been diverted for

agricultural use. Vast fields of cash crops such as cotton were developed during the Soviet era for economic reasons, which helped devastate the depletion of the Aral Sea, which depended on the water from these rivers for its survival. More than half the population of Central Asia depends on agriculture for their livelihood. The other half, of course, requires water and food for their existence.

Aral Sea Environmental Disaster

Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan share central Asia's shrinking the Aral Sea. The sea was once the fourth-largest body of water in the world, but it has been reduced to a fraction of its original area. In 1960, the Aral Sea covered about 26,254 square miles, an area larger than the US state of West Virginia. By 2009, the sea covered less than 10 percent of the same area. The entire eastern portion of the sea has become a sand desert, complete with the abandoned fishing vessels. The loss of water is approximately equivalent to the complete draining of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario in North America.

The water loss escalated when the Syr Darya River, which flowed into the northern part of the sea, and the Amu Darya River, which flowed into the southern side of the sea, were diverted irrigation of cotton and other crops. At about 1,500 miles long, the Amu Darya is the region's longest river. Its source is the high mountain streams and lakes of the Pamir Mountains. Environmental problems were further

exacerbated by the extensive use of pesticides and fertilizers in agricultural processes. The chemicals contaminated the water flowing into the Aral Sea. Once the water dried up in the sea, the winds carried the buildup of chemicals and salt from the dry seabed over the land, causing severe health-related problems in the nearby human population. Cancer and respiratory illness rates continue to be higher than usual. Water and land pollution is a severe problem. Even the climate around the Aral Sea has changed gradually because of the loss of water from evaporation for precipitation. The climate is getting warmer in the summer and colder in the winter. The moderating effect of this vast body of water on its surrounding area is no longer as prominent as it once was.

The decline of the Aral Sea has destroyed habitats and the local economy. The fishing industry, which employed more than sixty thousand people, has been devastated. The remaining western portion of the sea has a rising salt content contributing to the decline of the fish population. Adding to the environmental devastation, the Soviets conducted biological weapons experiments on an island that was once in the middle of the Aral Sea. Hazardous wastes such as anthrax and toxic chemicals contaminated the land and found their way into the sea. Efforts have been made to marginalize the environmental damage of the contamination, but the damage has not been completely ameliorated. The sea has historically been an essential environmental location for wildlife. It is located in a major flyway for migratory waterfowl in Central

Asia and served as essential habitat. The deterioration of the Aral Sea and the destruction of habitat for waterfowl and other organisms is one of the world's worst environmental catastrophes. The fact that the Aral Sea is located in a region that is not part of the global community's core economic area has rendered it "out of sight and out of mind" by entities that could provide economic support.

In the northern portion of the Aral Sea, called the Little Aral Sea, there has been some success in abating the deterioration of this once-thriving environmental habitat. A major dam has been constructed that partitions off the Little Aral Sea, causing water from the Syr Darya River to increase the Little Aral Sea's water level and reduce the salt content. Canals, dikes, and irrigation processes have been updated to reduce water loss and increase the amount that flows into the northern section. The development efforts have caused the water level to rise and have reinvigorated the once-struggling fishing industry. The efforts have been undertaken by Kazakhstan's government, which controls the Little Aral Sea.

A significant part of the southern portion of the once-thriving sea is located in Uzbekistan, which has not contributed the economic attention necessary to halt the sea's continued deterioration. The remaining western portion of the Uzbekistan side of the Aral Sea will continue to shrink if measures are not taken to address the loss of water from the Amu Darya River. The eastern side was arid by 2009. Uzbekistan has responded to the situation by contracting out

to various multinational oil companies from Korea, China, and Russia to explore oil beneath the dry sea.

The Aral Sea's demise was caused by the diversion of water from its northern inlet, the Syr Darya River. At the other end of the Syr Darya River, an additional factor-augmented the lack of water flow: the Soviet Union placed a dam on the river and allowed the overflow from the dam to flow into low-lying dry pans, creating artificial lakes. As a result, Aydar Lake was created and became the second-largest lake in Uzbekistan. Various species of fish were introduced, and the lake became a significant source for commercial fishing. Hundreds of tons of fish are harvested annually. Just as fishing was declining in the Aral Sea, the fishing industry was growing at Aydar Lake.

6.3 HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE REGION

Cultural Hearths

Availability and control of freshwater have typically resulted in humans' ability to grow food crops and expand their cultural activities. Hunter-gatherer groups did not settle down in one area but were more nomadic because of their seasonal search for food. As humans developed the ability to grow crops and provide enough food in one place, they no longer needed to move. The earliest human settlements sprang up in what is the present-day Middle East. Early human settlements provide some indication of early urbanization patterns based on the availability of surplus of food. The shift to permanent settlements included the domestication of livestock and the production of grain crops. Fruits and vegetables were grown and harvested domestically. This era's activities created humanity's earliest version of the rural-to-urban shift associated with the Industrial Revolution or present development. It is theorized that the ability to grow excess food provided the time and resources for urbanization and

the establishment of organized communities, which often progressed into political entities or regional empires.

It has been estimated that some of the earliest cities in the world – such as Jericho – were first inhabited around 10,000 BCE in the Middle East. In the same region, two cultural hearths provide significant historical value to the concept of human development: Mesopotamia and the Nile Valley in Egypt. Both areas were settings for the growth of human civilization and are still being examined and studied today. In Mesopotamia, a remarkable human civilization emerged along the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in present-day Iraq, Syria, and southern Turkey. The climate, soils, and availability of freshwater provided the ingredients for the growth of a human civilization held in high esteem because of its significant contributions to our human history.

Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent

Mesopotamia, meaning “land between rivers,” is located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Neolithic pottery found there has been dated to before 7000 BCE. Humans in this area urbanized as early as 5000 BCE. People were settling in the Mesopotamia region, building magnificent cities, and developing their sense of human culture. Mesopotamia gave rise to a historical cradle of civilization that included the Assyrian, Babylonian, Sumerian, and Akkadian Empires, all established during the Bronze Age (about 3000 BCE or later).

Famous cities such as Ur, Babylon, and Nineveh were located in Mesopotamia. The control of water and the ability to grow excess food contributed to their success. They developed extensive irrigation systems. Large grain storage units were necessary to provide the civic structure and develop a military to protect and serve the city or empire. Human activity in this area extends around the region to the Mediterranean Sea, where Fertile Crescent comes from.

Various ancient groups were well established on the eastern side of the Fertile Crescent along the Mediterranean coast. The cities of Tyre and Sidon were ports and access points for trade and commerce for groups like the Phoenicians who traded throughout the Mediterranean. Ancient cities such as Damascus and Jericho became established in the same region and were good examples of early human urbanization during the Bronze Age. These cities are two of the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world.

Mapping Cradles of Civilization



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Nile River Civilization

Human civilization also emerged along the Nile River valley of what is now Egypt. The pyramids and the Sphinx in the Giza Plateau just outside Cairo stand testimony to the human endeavors that took place here. Spring flooding of the Nile River brought nutrients and water to the land along the Nile Valley. The land could produce excess food, which subsequently led to the ability to support a structured, urbanized civilization. The Nile River is the lifeblood of the region. In the fifth century BCE, the ancient Greek historian Herodotus suggested that Egypt was “the gift of the Nile.” The dating for the beginning of the civilization along the Nile River is often in question, but Egyptologists estimate the first dynasty ruled Upper and Lower Egypt around 3100 BCE. Upper Egypt is in the south, and Lower Egypt is in the north because the Nile River flows north. The terms “Upper” and “Lower” refer to elevation. Geologists, using the erosion patterns of the Sphinx, estimate that it was constructed about

10,000 BCE. Humans' ability to harness the potential of the environment set the stage for technological advancements that continue to this day. The Egyptian civilization flourished for thousands of years and spawned a legacy that influenced their neighbors in the region, who benefited from their advancements.

The human activities that created the civilizations in Mesopotamia and Egypt's Nile River gave humanity a rich heritage to help us understand our history. Many of our legends, stories, and myths have their origins in these cultures. Their cultural developments provided the basis for much of the Western world's religious beliefs and early philosophical ideas. The engineering feats needed to create the magnificent temples and pyramids have by themselves been studied and analyzed over the centuries to give modern scientists and scholars a reason to pause and recognize the high level of organization and structure that must have gone into developing and managing these civilizations. These ancient people were developing various aspects of science and the arts. Writing, mathematics, engineering, and astronomy were becoming highly advanced. Artifacts such as clay tablets and hieroglyphs are still being discovered, interpreted, and shed additional light on the advancements of these civilizations and their contribution to our collective human civilization.

Arab Spring of 2011

The year 2011 brought about significant changes for the human geography of parts of this realm. The year ushered in a wave of human activity that awakened the citizens' power to speak out against conditions in their country and actively protest against their governments. North Africa, the Middle East, and the Arabian Peninsula experienced the highest levels of protests and insurgency. Political leaders that had been in power for extended periods were challenged and removed from office. Democratic reforms were requested or demanded by citizens seeking more individual freedom and greater access to political power. Uprisings in some of the countries were internal; other countries received external support or intervention. Overall, demonstrations, protests, and outright revolution involved millions of people desiring improved living conditions and a better future for themselves and their families.

Protests emerged in North Africa at the beginning of 2011. Tunisia was the first country in which leadership felt the heat of civil resistance and open revolution. In January, the Tunisian president of more than twenty-three years was forced to flee to Saudi Arabia. In Egypt, millions of protesters demonstrated in the streets against political corruption and the lack of reforms. The revolution of Egypt's citizens was not an armed conflict, but it was an effective protest because it eventually brought about the ouster of President Hosni

Mubarak, who had been in office for almost thirty years. Demonstrations and protests continued against governments in Morocco and Algeria; they voiced their concerns regarding high unemployment, poor living conditions, and government corruption. Libya's protests erupted into a full-scale armed revolution as anti-government rebels took control of Benghazi's city to topple Muammar Gadhafi's forty-two years of authoritarian control of the government, oil revenues, and the people. The armed Libyan revolution was eventually successful in taking Tripoli and removing Gadhafi and his family from power. The revolution in Libya was aided by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) airstrikes and the implementation of a no-fly zone over the country.

The ripple effect that the Tunisian revolution had on North Africa was felt on the Arabian Peninsula in Yemen and Bahrain. In Yemen, mass public demonstrations over government corruption, economic conditions, and high unemployment escalated into armed conflicts between government troops and opposition factions that wanted the president removed from office. In Bahrain, the protests and demonstrations were centered on the request for more personal freedoms and a more significant role in leadership for the Shia population, who experienced discrimination by the Sunni-dominated government. Protests also occurred in Oman for more significant reforms.

The Middle East did not escape the Arab Spring of 2011. Protests in Jordan forced King 'Abdullah II to reorganize his

government. Israel and Lebanon were not as affected, as they have been addressing many of these issues on an ongoing basis. The country experiencing the most significant impact was Syria. Mass demonstrations and protests against the government were staged in several cities across the country. In Syria, the long-term leadership of an Alawite minority continues to run the government and control the military. The al-Assad family—a father and then his son—has ruled Syria since 1971. The Syrian government has cracked down on the revolution with hard-line measures aimed at subduing the protests and demonstrations. By September 2011, more than two thousand protesters had been killed in Syria, and many more were detained or tortured. Countless others have tried to flee to neighboring countries for their safety. The protesters in Syria want democratic reforms as well as the end of the al-Assad family reign.

Other parts of the realm also felt the effects of the Arab Spring of 2011 with mixed results. Iran has had similar protests and demonstrations in past years, but there was no major revolution or uprising as a direct result of the Arab Spring. Iran is not an Arab country but has experienced ongoing political friction between citizen factions and the government. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have tempered or isolated internal protests or revolutionary activities in those countries, even though armed conflicts continue. Various Central Asian states have been working through similar issues, but either has not had mass demonstrations or have not received news media

attention regarding their situations. The wave of change swept over the realm of the Arab Spring of 2011 is an example of how centripetal and centrifugal cultural forces act on a state or region. The political landscape was altered or drastically changed in many countries. The impact of these changes will be realized in the years and decades to come.

Islam

It could be argued that the dominant cultural trait in the region is Islam: most of the people in the realm are Muslims. The practice of Islam in day-to-day life takes different forms in the various divisions of the religion. The differences between the divisions have contributed to conflict or open warfare. Islam acts as more than just a religion. It also serves as a strong cultural force that has historically unified or divided people. The divisive nature of the religion has often resulted in severe political confrontations within the realm between groups of different Islamic ideologies. Concurrently, Islam's religion is also a unifying force that brings Muslims with similar beliefs together with common bonds. Islam provides structure and consistency in daily life.

Faith can provide comfort and a way of living. The holy cities of Mecca and Medina are located in Saudi Arabia. Other holy cities for other Islam divisions include Jerusalem and the two cities holy to Shia Muslims: Karbala and Najaf in Iraq.

Islam dominates the realm, but other religions are significant in various regions. Israel is a Jewish state, and Christianity is common in places from Lebanon to Egypt. There are also followers of the Baha'i faith, Zoroastrianism, and groups such as the Druze, to name a few.

Located in the mountains of western Saudi Arabia, Mecca's city (also spelled Makkah) began as an early trade center for the region and a hub for camel caravans trading throughout Southwest Asia and North Africa. Mecca is about forty-five miles from the Red Sea coast at an elevation of 531 feet. South of Mecca, the mountains reach more than 7,200 feet in elevation. According to Islamic tradition, the patriarch Abraham came to Mecca with his Egyptian wife Hagar and their son Ishmael more than two thousand years before the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (born 571 CE). When Hagar died, Abraham and Ishmael built the Kaaba (or Ka'ba), a rectangular shrine that included a unique stone in Mecca. The shrine was destined to become one of the holiest sites for nomadic groups in Arabia. Abraham later died in Palestine in what is now the country of Israel. Centuries after Abraham's death, the Kaaba and its rituals deteriorated and mixed with other local traditions.

The Prophet Muhammad

The traditional groups in the region of Arabia were polytheistic and worshiped their gods. By Muhammad's time,

Mecca is said to have been a center of worship to more than 360 deities or gods; the greatest of these was Allah (meaning “the god”). Allah was known as the chief of the Meccan pantheon of gods and was worshiped from southern Syria to Arabia. Mecca was full of idols, temples, and worship sites. Tradition states that the god Allah was the only god without an idol; he would become the sole entity of Muhammad’s new Islamic religion.

Muhammad, born in Mecca 571 years after the birth of Christ and about 100 years after the fall of the Roman Empire, was orphaned at an early age and was employed in a camel caravan when he reached his teens. His life and what has been reported about it changed the Middle East forever. Muhammad traveled throughout the region with the camel caravans. He was fortunate to have been able to live as he did because most orphans in the region did not have many opportunities in life. His travels introduced him to many people, places, and issues. His situation changed when Muhammad and a widow many years his senior was married. Muhammad became a merchant, the leader of a camel caravan, and a respected member of his community. He was reported to have been intelligent and a wise businessman.

The traditional groups that traded in Mecca held many different religious beliefs. The city was a forum for the many vices and activities associated with trade, travel, and metropolitan business. To escape Mecca’s activities, Muhammad would often seek the mountains’ solitude, where

he would contemplate and think. Tradition states that the angel Gabriel appeared to him while he was meditating in a mountain cave in 610 CE when Muhammad was about forty. Muhammad was given words from Allah, which he recited from memory to his followers. According to tradition, Muhammad was illiterate; his supporters wrote down his words, compiled them into the Koran (Qur'an), the holiest book of Islam. Muhammad was the founder of the new religion, which he called Islam (meaning "submission to Allah"). The term Muslim (meaning "one who submits") refers to a follower of Islam.

After Muhammad returned to Mecca and related his visions and Allah's words from the angel Gabriel, he began to speak out against the city's vices and many gods. He stated that there was only one god: Allah, the same creator, the God of Abraham. Muhammad spoke out against gambling and drinking alcohol and advocated the caretaking of widows and orphans. He also preached regarding family and community. His message was not well received: in 622 CE, the people of Mecca forced Muhammad out. He fled to the safety of the nearby city of Medina on a journey known as the *hejira* (*hijra*). This historic journey became the start of the Islamic calendar, which is based on the lunar cycles. Muhammad found refuge in Medina and became a respected citizen.

Launching out from Medina, Muhammad and those loyal to him defeated Mecca's army and converted the city into Islam's holiest place. They destroyed all Mecca's idols and

temples except the Kaaba. Muhammad's teaching united the many Arabian groups under one religion. Since the Koran was written in Arabic, Arabic became the official language of Islam. The Kaaba and the mosque built at Mecca became the center of the Islamic world and a destination for Muslim pilgrims. Islam brought a new identity, a faith in one god, and a set of values to the Arab world. Islam made sense in a world with many traditional beliefs and few unifying principles.

It is essential to keep in mind that monotheist belief was not new: Christianity had been around for more than six hundred years. Judaism and Zoroastrianism in Persia had been around for centuries before Christianity. The principles of Islam and Muhammad's teachings are a continuation of Judaism and Christianity. All three traditions assert a faith in a divine creator, with important messages coming through prophets or holy messengers. All three religions acknowledge Abraham as a founding patriarch. Muslims believe that Moses and Jesus were major prophets and that Muhammad was the most significant and final prophet. All three religions have stories about creation, Adam and Eve, the flood, and similar stories adapted to each religion's traditions and characters.

Religion is an essential component of culture. The religions that emerged out of the Middle East absorbed many of the existing cultural traits, traditions, or habits of the people into their religious practices. Early Islam adapted many Arab cultural traits, styles of dress, foods, and the pilgrimage and folded them into its principles. Early Christianity and Judaism

also adopted cultural traits, holidays, styles of dress, and cultural traditions.

Spatial Diffusion of Islam

The spread of Islam was accomplished through trade and conquest. Mecca was a center of trade. When camel caravans left Mecca, they carried Muhammad's teachings with them. Islam diffused from Mecca and spread throughout the Middle East and into Central Asia and North Africa. The geographic principle of spatial diffusion can be applied to any phenomenon, idea, disease, or concept that spreads through a population across space and through time. The spatial diffusion of Islam outward from Mecca was significant and predictable.

There are two main types of spatial diffusion: expansion diffusion and relocation diffusion. Expansion diffusion has two main subtypes: contagious diffusion and hierarchical diffusion. A religion can spread from individual to individual through contagious diffusion when a religion starts at one point and propagates or expands outward from person to person or place in a pattern similar to the spreading of disease. Another way religion can spread through expansion diffusion is hierarchical, when rulers of a region convert to the religion and decree it as the official religion of their realm; the religion filters down the political chain of command and eventually reaches the masses. The second type of diffusion, relocation

diffusion, occurs when the religion relocates to a new place from a central point. When Islam jumped from the Middle East to Indonesia, it diffused through relocation. Relocation diffusion also occurred when Islam spread to the United States.

Early on, the unifying principles of Islam found their way into the regional groups of Arabia and their leaders. By 700 CE, Islam had spread to the east, to the Mogul Empire of Pakistan and northern India. In India, Emperor Shah Jehan, who built the famous architectural marvel of the Taj Mahal as a mausoleum for his wife, was a Muslim. The expansion of Islam fueled the Arab Empire of the Middle East. The capital city of the Arab Empire was first established at Medina and moved to Damascus and later to Baghdad. While Europe was enduring the Dark Ages, Islam experienced a renaissance, expanding its knowledge of mathematics, architecture, and the sciences. The Arab institutions of higher learning kept the Greek classics alive and established universities in Toledo (Spain), Cairo, and Baghdad. As of 2010, Islam has attracted as many as 1.5 billion followers, second only to Christianity, which has about 2 billion followers. Hinduism is third, with about 900 million followers. Buddhism is considered the world's fourth-largest religion.

Five Pillars of Islam

The basic tenets of the Five Pillars of Islam create the

foundational structure of Islam. Prayer is an integral part of religion. A Muslim must offer prayers five times a day: before sunrise, at midday, at mid-afternoon, after sunset, and in the early evening. During prayer, Muslims face toward the compass direction of Mecca. Before clocks and time were well established, a mosque leader would climb a minaret (a tall tower next to the mosque, their place of public worship) and call the faithful to prayer at the required times of the day. Muslims gather together for common prayer on Friday, which is a time to unite believers. Mosques sprang up after Muhammad died, becoming the center of community activities in the Islamic world.

The Five Pillars of Islam can be translated as follows:

- Express the basic creed (**Shahadah**). Profess that there is no god but Allah and his messenger and prophet is Muhammad.
- Perform the prayers (**Salat**). Pray five times a day.
- Pay alms or give to charity (**Zakat**). Share what you have with less fortunate people.
- Fast (**Sawm**). During Ramadan, abstain from personal needs, drinking, and eating from dawn to dusk (as one's health permits).
- Make the pilgrimage to Mecca (**Hajj**). Conduct at least one pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca (if within one's capacity).

Death of Muhammad

Muhammad died at the age of sixty-two. He never claimed to be a god or anything other than a mere mortal, and no provision was made to continue Muhammad's work after he died. His tomb is located in Medina, the City of the Prophet. One division thought his successor should be a blood relative. This division led to the Shia (or Shi'ite) branch of Islam, which makes up about 15 percent of Muslims. Others felt that the successor should be a worthy follower and did not need to be blood relatives. This branch became known as Sunni, which makes up about 84 percent of Muslims. Various smaller branches of Islam also exist, including Sufi, which approaches the Islamic faith from a more mystical and spiritual perspective.

Sunni Muslims look to the family and community for direction; the whole community elects Sunni leaders. Shia Muslims look to their imams for the official source of direction. Imams hold the religious and political leadership in the Shia faith. Through the right of divine appointment, Imams are considered by many in the Shia division to hold absolute spiritual authority. Imams often have the final word regarding religious doctrine. Shia Muslims consider Muhammad's son-in-law and cousin Ali to be the origin of the direct line of succession for Imams. Ali is considered in Islam to have been the first person to accept and follow the words of

Muhammad. There are many subgroups or branches in each of the Islamic divisions.

In understanding the Middle East, it is most critical to understand the Sunni and Shia divisions of Islam. The Shia and Sunni divisions of Islam have sometimes had divergent beliefs, resulting in conflicts. In the early sixteenth century, the Persian Empire, which is now Iran, declared the Shia branch its official religion. Its surrounding neighbors were predominantly Sunni. This divergence is part of the basis for the current civil unrest in Iraq. The two divisions of Islam currently vie for political power and control in Iraq. The majority of the Arab population in Iraq, about 60 percent in 2010, follows the Shia division of Islam, but the leadership under Saddam Hussein until 2003 was Sunni. Tradition states that Ali is buried in the Iraqi city of Najaf, which Shia Muslims consider being one of the holiest sites in Islam. Just north of Najaf is Karbala, which is considered a holy place for Shia Muslims because it is the burial place of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson Husayn. The Shia majority in Iraq who are Arab share their faith with the Shia majority in Iran who are ethnically Persian.

Secular State or Religious State

Islam has a code of law called the Sharia criminal code, similar to Old Testament law. The Sharia dictates capital punishment for certain crimes. For example, if a person is caught stealing,

his or her arm would be severed. For more serious offenses, he or she would be beheaded or stoned to death. Some countries use Sharia as the law of their country. Countries are called religious states (Islamic states in this case) when religious codes take precedence over civil law. States in which people democratically vote on civil law based on the collective agreement are called secular states. Whereas secular states attempt to separate religious issues and civil law, religious states attempt to combine the two. Iran is an excellent example of an Islamic religious state, and Turkey is an excellent example of a secular state. When the United States invaded Iraq in 2003 and Saddam Hussein was removed from leadership, it entered a transitional period in which they had to decide if the country would develop into an Islamic state with the Sharia or move to a democratically elected government with civil law. The debate on these issues continually surfaces in many countries in North Africa and Southwest Asia whenever a transition occurs.

The cultural forces of democratic reforms and Islamic fundamentalism have been pushing and pulling on the Islamic world. Democratic reformers push for a more open society with equality for women, social freedoms for the people, and democratically elected government leaders. Islamic fundamentalists pull back toward a stricter following Islamic teachings; they oppose what they consider the decadent and vulgar ways of Western society and wish to restrict the influence of liberal, nonreligious teaching. A rift between militant Islamic fundamentalists and moderate Islamic

reformers is evident throughout the Muslim world. Militant leaders strive to uphold the Sharia criminal code as law. Moderate reformers work toward a civil law based on democratic consensus. This rift adds to the conflicts that have been occurring in this realm. Islamic fundamentalists push for a more traditional and conservative society and express opposition to the United States' intervention in the realm. The Muslim world will continue to confront such arguments about Islam's future direction in a globalized economy.

The Rise and Approaching Fall of ISIS

6.4 NORTH AFRICA AND THE AFRICAN TRANSITION ZONE

North Africa's primary connection with the Middle East and Central Asia is that Islam diffused to North Africa from the Middle East and Central Asia. Today, it is a Muslim-dominated realm with Arabic as its primary language. Historically, the ethnicity of North Africa was predominantly Berber with the nomadic Tuareg and other local groups interspersed. When Islam diffused into North Africa, the Arab influence and culture were infused with it. Modern Egypt has become the cornerstone of the Arab world; more Arabs live in Cairo than in any other city on Earth. The three main areas of interest are the Maghreb of the northwest; the Nile River valley in the east; and the African Transition Zone, where the Sahara Desert transitions into the tropical type A climates of Central Africa's equatorial region.

Islam diffused through North Africa to the Berber people of the Maghreb and entered Europe across the Strait of Gibraltar to the Iberian Peninsula. The Arab-Berber alliance, called the Moors, invaded Spain in 711 CE. The Islamic influence thrived in Iberia and continued into mainland Europe if not

stopped by Christian forces such as Charles Martel's army in the famous Battle of Tours. Islam was eventually pushed out of the Iberian Peninsula and held south of the Strait of Gibraltar. Islamic architecture and influence remain part of the heritage of Iberia.

The historical geography of North Africa is not complete without understanding the European influences that have dominated or controlled this region for centuries. The Roman Empire controlled much of the coastal area of the Mediterranean during its zenith. The Romans built ports, aqueducts, roads, and valuable infrastructure. After the fall of the Roman Empire, common bonds of religion and language were created for the people through the Arabs' invasion, who introduced the Islamic faith. North Africa was later dominated by European colonialism. France controlled and colonized the Barbary Coast region along North Africa's western waterfront, including Algeria, Tunisia, and parts of Morocco. Italians colonized the region that is now Libya. The Barbary Coast of the Mediterranean was once a haven for pirates and a danger to shipping during the colonial era. Even the United States involved itself in wars against the pirates off the Berber states of North Africa during the early 1800s. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Britain controlled Egypt and parts of Sudan. The Spanish colonized parts of Morocco and Western Sahara. In due time, resistance movements successfully defeated the colonial powers and declared independence for all the countries of North Africa. However,

the European influence remains through the region's dependence on trade and economic partnerships with Europe.

North Africa is separated from Subsaharan Africa by the African Transition Zone, a transitional area between Islamic-dominated North Africa and animist- and Christian-dominated Subsaharan Africa. It is also a transition between the Sahara Desert and the tropical type A climates of Africa's equatorial region. This is a zone subject to shifting boundaries. The region was once a major trade route between the Mali Empire of the west and Ethiopia's trade centers in the east. Camel caravans have crossed this sector of Africa for centuries, and camel caravans from Mecca might have traveled across this zone. Many nomadic groups continue to herd their livestock across the region in search of grazing.

The Maghreb: "Isle of the West"

The Maghreb is a region extending from Morocco to Libya distinguished by the main ranges of the Atlas Mountains, which reach elevations of near thirteen thousand feet. The main Atlas range is often snow-covered at higher elevations. The name Maghreb, which in Arabic means "Isle of the West," receives between ten and thirty inches of rainfall per year. This is substantially more rainfall than what is received in the Sahara Desert to the south. The Atlas Mountains extract

precipitation from the air in the form of rain or snow, which allows fruits and vegetables to be grown in the fertile mountain valleys of the Maghreb. To the south of this region is the vast Sahara Desert with lower precipitation and warmer temperatures. Libya is actually outside the Atlas Mountain range but is associated with the Maghreb by most local inhabitants.

Aided by a moderate type C climate, the northern coastal region of the Maghreb and the mountain valleys are a center for agricultural production, including grapes, dates, oranges, olives, and other food products. Think about how geography affects population: Which climate type do most human groups gravitate toward? What conditions will you find when you combine this climate type and generous quantities of water and food? As you fit the pieces of the geographic puzzle together, you can understand why populations centralize in some places and not in others. The Maghreb is an attractive place for human habitation, but it borders on the inhospitable vastness of the Sahara Desert. Most of the Maghreb's residents live in cities along the Mediterranean coast. There are few people in the vast desert interior of these countries. The exceptions are groups such as the Tuareg that are found in the Sahara.

The Maghreb is an expansive region with countries of size. Algeria, Libya, and Morocco are large countries in terms of physical area. Algeria is Africa's largest country as of 2011. Algeria is similar in area to the entire United States east of the

Mississippi River, Libya is larger than the state of Alaska, and Morocco is the same size as California. A large percentage of Algeria south of the Maghreb and a large area south of the Mediterranean coastline in Libya fit the classification of desert conditions. The largest cities of Libya are along the coast, but other Libyan cities are in the desert region. Tunisia, the smallest of the countries on the Mediterranean, is about the same size as the US state of Wisconsin and has mountains in its north and desert areas to the southwest.

All the countries of the Maghreb have former connections to Europe. These ties have strengthened in recent years because of an increase in trade and the economic dependencies that have been created between Europe and the Mediterranean. North Africa can grow fruit and vegetable crops that are not as plentiful in the colder northern latitudes. In the last half of the twentieth century, an enormous amount of oil was discovered in the Maghreb, and Europe has a growing need for energy. The discovery of oil changed the trade equation: oil and natural gas revenues subsequently advanced past agricultural goods as the main export products. Oil and natural gas exports now make up 95 percent of the export income for Algeria and Libya.

Economic Geography of the Maghreb

Europe, which is in the higher stages of the index of economic development, has small families with fewer young people to

fill entry-level service jobs, and North Africa has a burgeoning population of young people seeking employment. Many people from North Africa speak the languages of their former colonial masters, and they find the transition to a European lifestyle relatively straightforward when they leave North Africa seeking employment. Migration from the shores of North Africa to Europe is not difficult; the Strait of Gibraltar, for example, is only about nine miles across from Morocco to Spain.

European countries have attempted to implement measures to halt the tide of illegal immigration into their continent from North Africa but have not been successful. The need for cheap labor in European countries is a significant economic factor in this equation. The core-periphery spatial relationship creates the push-pull forces of migration based on opportunities and advantages. Europe needs cheap labor, and more energy provides employment opportunities and has an advantage in its higher standards of living: these forces attract immigration and pull people toward Europe. North Africa can supply labor and oil, has high levels of unemployment, and suffers from poor economic conditions: these factors push people to emigrate from North Africa to places where conditions are more attractive. Europe is the core economic region, and North Africa is the peripheral economic region. People usually shift from periphery to core in their migration patterns, which is the case across the Mediterranean.

European and American influences have been influential

in North Africa. Western culture continues to compete with fundamental Islamic tendencies in the region, especially in urban centers. In Morocco, the farthest country from Mecca, democratic reforms have led to more opportunities for women and led to exposure to Western fashions, ideas, and products. Tunisia has a supportive, Westernized society. In Libya, birth control or family planning products have not always been supported by the government, so family size remained relatively high until about 1985 when it began to decline. Women are allowed to go to college in Libya, but a smaller percentage are enrolled compared to men. More than 90 percent of Libyans live in urban areas. Exposure to Western concepts, along with urbanizing and industrializing of the economy, has caused a drop in family size in Libya – from 7.5 children in 1975 to about 4.0 children in 1990, and down to 3.0 children in 2010 (Central Intelligence Agency). More women are trading traditional dress for Western-style clothing and are entering the workforce to the extent they are allowed.

Political Geography of the Maghreb

Economic and political pressures are building across North Africa. Toward the end of 2010 and the spring of 2011, activists called for the governments in North Africa to implement change and address the push of North Africans for stronger democratic openness, less government corruption, and the sharing of wealth accumulated by those in power.

Leaders have been reluctant to relinquish power and are being challenged by protests and revolution. The people's driving forces have been high unemployment rates, high food prices, and the lack of adequate housing.

Western Sahara and Morocco

Western Sahara is the region south of Morocco. In the latter half of the 1970s, Morocco annexed and took control of this region following the withdrawal of Mauritanian control. A local resistance group called the Polisario Front challenged Morocco's claim to Western Sahara and staged a guerilla war to fight for Western Sahara's independence. By 1991, the United Nations (UN) had stepped in, brokered a halt to the fighting, and worked to resolve the matter. Both sides have offered proposals to the UN; Morocco's plan advocates for annexation, and Polisario's plan is for independence. Western Sahara is mainly desert terrain and only has about three hundred thousand people. The UN delegation has indicated that independence is not realistic. However, talks continue between the factions to work out a solution.

Algeria

Algeria has also experienced violent clashes; in this case, the clashes are between Islamic fundamentalist groups and the

democratically elected government. In the 1990s, the Islamic Salvation Front, which advocates for a fundamentalist Islamic state in Algeria, challenged the secular political mainstream. The electoral process was interrupted, and the government found itself fighting an Islamic insurgency within the country. By 1998, more than one hundred thousand people had been killed. The horror of the violence received international attention. Islamic extremists widened their attacks and massacred entire villages to send a message to support their cause. By the end of the decade, government forces gained control of the country, and the Islamic Salvation Front officially disbanded. Smaller extremist groups continued to operate. They joined forces with Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda group to create an insurgent group called al-Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb, which has continued a campaign of terror and violence against the Algerian government and people in the region with Western interests. Coinciding with similar protests across North Africa, during 2010 and 2011, there was an insurgence of protests and demonstrations against Algeria's government by its people, who were asking for better living conditions. The government made some concessions to address the issues, but Algeria's political climate continues to be tense as the government struggles to find ways to satisfy people's needs.

Tunisia

Tunisia was once an outpost of the Roman Empire, and well-preserved Roman ruins can be found throughout North Africa. In 1956, at the end of the colonial era, France recognized Tunisia's independence, and the country established its government. The political problems in Tunisia today stem from the fact that little has changed in the government since its independence. Since independence, Tunisia has had few changes in government leaders. Ben Ali, the country's second president, dominated the country for twenty-four years (1987–2011). Ben Ali worked to stem the tide of Islamic fundamentalism, opened the country to establish rights for women, and allowed more tolerance of religious diversity; however, under his leadership, the government struggled to find a balance between democratic openness and authoritarian measures to keep the country moving forward with economic development and social services for a growing population.

Beginning in 2010, corruption, unemployment, and a lack of personal freedoms prompted Tunisians to take to the streets in massive protests, which grew into a revolution for change. By the end of the year, President Ben Ali was removed from power, and an interim government was formed. Protests continued as the government shifted to adapt to the conditions. In 2011, a new constitutional assembly was

formed to address changes in the government. Economic conditions have remained thorny during the transition.

Libya

Muammar Gadhafi came to power in Libya in 1969 by overthrowing the king and never held an election for political control. He used Libya's oil revenues to build up the country's infrastructure, enhance his military, and create an anti-Western terrorist network with weapons production. Personal freedoms have been limited in Libya, and there has been no free speech, freedom of the press, or freedom of assembly. Gadhafi supported various Islamic terrorist groups and nationalized all the oil assets of international corporations in Libya in the early 1980s. This action of nationalism directly opposed and angered many corporate colonialists. His policies caused the international oil companies, which operated much of the oil industry, pressured the US government to conduct a series of devastating military bombing raids on Libya in 1986 in an attempt to kill Gadhafi.

Gadhafi deployed his military along Libya's southern border with Chad in a zone called the Aozou Strip. This border territory was the site of a boundary dispute over land reported to hold uranium reserves. Libyan forces controlled the Aozou Strip for several years before Chad forced them out. In 1994, the UN ruled that the zone belonged to Chad, and the dispute was finally resolved. In other activities, Libyan agents were

accused of planting bombs on passenger airlines, such as the 1988 explosion on Pan Am flight over Scotland that killed 270 people and the 1989 explosion of UTA flight 772 over Niger that killed 170 people. After the 9-11 tragedy in New York, Gadhafi backed down on his aggressive anti-Western activities and agreed to dismantle some of his weapons production facilities and comply with international trade agreements. Libya then denounced terrorism, and the United States lifted economic sanctions against Libya and exchanged ambassadors.

Unrest in Libya surfaced in 2011, coinciding with protests underway in neighboring Tunisia, Algeria, and Egypt. Factions in Libya that opposed Gadhafi's regime advocated for his removal from office and more democratic freedoms. Based in Libya's second-largest city of Benghazi, in the eastern sector of the country, the resistance movement gained momentum and pushed for an all-out civil war that split the country in half. Forces loyal to Gadhafi in the capital city of Tripoli in the western part faced the separatists under the structure of the National Transitional Council (NTC). In 2011, Gadhafi had been in power for more than forty-two years. His family and clan controlled much of the country's wealth from the export of oil. Gadhafi's control of Libya did not allow for the establishment of strong administrative divisions within the government to share power.

Through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the UN implemented a no-fly zone over Libya and allowed military strikes against Gadhafi's forces to stop the civilians'

massacre in the civil war. By the end of the summer of 2011, the resistance forces headquartered in Benghazi had pushed across to the western part of Libya and took control of Tripoli. Gadhafi was no longer in control of the country, as the NTC became the transitional power base. Muammar Gadhafi was killed in October 2011. Post-Gadhafi Libya will most likely be quite different from the status quo of the past four decades. Nation-building will become a significant focus for North Africa, which may be more difficult for Libya than its neighbors because of the lack of an administrative structure.

Nile River and Egypt

The Nile River originates in East Africa in Lake Victoria and Ethiopia in Lake Tana. The White Nile flows north from Lake Victoria through Uganda and into Sudan, where it converges with the Blue Nile at Khartoum, Sudan's capital. The Blue Nile originates in Lake Tana in Ethiopia. From Khartoum, the Nile River flows north through the Nubian Desert into Egypt, where it eventually reaches the Mediterranean Sea. The freshwater of the Nile is a lifeline that enables agriculture and transportation and supports a growing human population in the region.

Until the Aswan High Dam was completed in 1968, the river flooded its banks yearly, depositing silt and nutrients onto the soil and causing enormous damage to infrastructure. As

far back as when the pharaohs ruled Egypt, the people used flood irrigation to grow their crops. Today, water is pumped from the controlled Nile River onto the fields to water crops. This change has increased the number of crops that can be grown per year. However, it has also caused a buildup of salt in the soil, resulting in declining soil quality. Without annual flooding, the salts cannot be dissolved away but remain in the soil, reducing yields. Almost a third of Egypt's population works in agriculture; about half the population is rural.

Population Dynamics

Cairo, Egypt's capital, lies at the northern end of the Nile River. With a population of more than ten million, it is the largest North African city and home to more Arabs than any other city. It is considered the cornerstone city of Arab culture. Cairo is so crowded that more than a million people live in its old cemetery, the City of the Dead. Cairo's residents and the millions of people in Egypt depend on the Nile River for their survival. About 95 percent of Egypt's population lives within fifteen miles of the Nile River. As the population has grown, urban expansion has encroached on the farmland of the Nile Valley. Egypt can no longer produce enough food for its people; about 15 percent of its food comes from other countries, mainly the United States.

Conflicts between democratic reforms and Islamic fundamentalism are evident in Egypt. The growing

population of about eighty million in 2010 is a significant concern. In Egypt's case, democratic reformers were able to promote a vigorous family planning program and birth control to help reduce family size, which in 2008 was at 2.8 children per woman and declining. The government even created a popular Egyptian soap opera to promote the concept that it was appropriate in Arab culture to use family planning and have a small family. The prime-time program, called *And the Nile Flows On*, told the story of a young village bride dealing with pregnancy and life issues complicated by the interjection of a progressive sheik and a meddling female doctor. The drama addressed many family planning and religious issues regarding the acceptability of breaking with tradition to address the growing population problem in Egypt.

Television programming is widespread in Egypt, and even reruns of old American shows such as *Bonanza* and *Dallas* are dubbed into Arabic and shown on Egyptian television. Egypt is a cultural mix with a strong heritage steeped in Arab history with a secular side open to the outside world. The cultural forces that create this paradox have not always been in unison. Egypt has a significant connection to Western society because of tourism. The Pyramids of Giza and the Great Sphinx are significant attractions that pull in millions of people per year from around the world. Tourism opens up Egypt to outside elements from various cultural backgrounds, most of which are secular.

Political Dynamics

On the political front, the democratically elected government has received strong opposition from the Islamic Brotherhood, which advocates a more fundamentalist Islamic lifestyle and government structure. The democratic reformers that vie with the Islamic Brotherhood for political power support a more open and democratic civil government. These two elements are what drive Egyptian culture and society.

The political situation changed in Egypt with the Arab Spring of 2011. Student protests against government corruption and the lack of democratic reforms emerged with an intensity that gained the Egyptian people's support and forced the Egyptian government to respond. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak had been in power since 1981 after the assassination of the previous president, Anwar Sadat. President Mubarak was able to win every election for president that had been held since that time. Millions of Egyptians took to the streets in early 2011 in civil protests against the Mubarak government. Massive protests and demonstrations continued until February 11, when President Mubarak announced his resignation. The transition to an interim government has been complicated by continued protests and calls for justice from the people, who have called for Mubarak to stand trial for stealing billions of dollars from the state and concealing it in his bank accounts. The people and the government continue to search for progressive opportunities to address their issues.

What started as the Arab Spring turned into the Arab Year as all three long-term leaders in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt were removed from power positions.

African Transition Zone

Stretching across the widest part of Africa on the southern edge of the Sahara Desert is the African Transition Zone. Known as the Sahel, meaning “border or margin,” this zone is where the dry arid conditions of the desert north meet up with the tropics’ moister region. For thousands of years, the Sahel’s seasonal grazing lands have been home to nomadic groups herding their livestock across the zone and eking out a living held together by tradition and heritage. Changing climate conditions and overgrazing has enhanced the desertification process, and the region is slowly turning into a desert.

The Sahara Desert is shifting southward, altering the economic activities of the millions of people who live in its path. Ten thousand years ago, North Africa and the Sahara Desert were tropical environments filled with all the biodiversity and wildlife now found in Sub-Saharan Africa. This desertification process has been occurring for centuries; it is not a new process. Human factors and climate change may be accelerating this process, but they did not create it.

Political stability is complicated to achieve in the African Transition Zone. The political borders established by

European colonialism during the Berlin Conference of 1884 remain intact and create barriers that hamper the nomadic groups from traveling through the Sahel in search of grazing land for their livestock. Political boundaries now restrict movement and keep people divided and separated into national identities. The African Transition Zone is transitioning from a rural, traditional agrarian culture to a society confronting the information age and modern technology. Camel caravans that once transported goods and materials across vast expanses of desert terrain are being replaced with motor vehicles and aircraft. The many traditional groups across this zone adapt to the conditions of the modern world but work to retain their values and the traditions of their heritage.

The colonial political borders have impeded progress in the region's effort to establish stable governments and control the land and resources within its borders. Postindependence governments have thus far been unable to establish stable economic conditions within many of the countries in the Sahel. Natural resources are being exploited for economic profit, which is changing the natural environment. Security and safety have become significant issues. Today this region is unstable, with political and cultural conflicts between the local groups and governments. The current conflicts in Sudan are examples of instability.

6.5 ISRAEL AND ITS NEIGHBORS

The State of Israel

In the center of the Middle East, on the shores of the Mediterranean in the Levant (the area bordering the eastern Mediterranean Sea), is the country of Israel. Lebanon borders Israel to the north, Syria, and Jordan to the east and Egypt to the south. Covering an area of only 8,522 square miles, Israel is smaller than the US state of Massachusetts and only one-fifth the size of the state of Kentucky. The coastal region, which has a moderate type C climate, receives more rainfall than the dry interior and the Negev Desert in the south, both of which have arid type B climates. The Sea of Galilee, also called Lake Kinneret or the Sea of Tiberias, is a significant freshwater supply. The Jordan River flows from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea is 1,300 feet below sea level, so it has no outlet. Over time, salts and minerals have built up, creating an environment that does not support fish or aquatic life. South of the Negev Desert is the Gulf of Aqaba, which provides access to the Red Sea for Israel and Jordan. Israel does not have substantial oil resources but has a

potential for natural gas in offshore locations along the Mediterranean Sea.

Though most of the Middle East population is Islamic, there are exceptions, such as in Israel, which has a Jewish majority. Israel was established in 1948. Before that time, the country was called Palestine. The region went through a series of tumultuous transitions before it became the nation of Israel. Before 1948, most people in Palestine were called Palestinians and consisted primarily of Arab Muslims, Samaritans, Bedouins, and Jews. Most Jewish people were dispersed throughout the world, with the majority in Europe and the United States.

The Division of Palestine

Palestine was a part of the Turkish Ottoman Empire before the end of World War I. Britain defeated Turkish forces in 1917 and occupied Palestine for the remainder of the war. The Versailles Peace Conference's mandate granted the British government control of Palestine in 1919 at the end of World War I. Britain supported the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which favored a Jewish homeland. The British Mandate included Palestine and Transjordan, the area east of the Jordan River, which includes the current country of Jordan.

Between 1922 and 1947, most of the population of Palestine was ethnically Arab during British control and followed Islam. In 1922, Jews made up less than 20 percent of

the population. The Jewish settlements were mainly along the west coast and in the north. Jewish people from other countries—including primarily Jews escaping German oppression in the 1930s—migrated to the Israeli settlements. Palestine was turned over to the control of the newly created United Nations (UN) in 1945 at the end of World War II.

The UN created the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) in 1947. To address the Palestine region, UNSCOP recommended that Palestine be divided into an Arab state, a Jewish state, and an international territory that included Jerusalem. Palestine was divided by the UN. About 44 percent of the territory was allocated to the Palestinians, who consisted of about 67 percent of the population, mainly Arab. Approximately 56 percent of the territory was allocated to the minority Jewish population, which only consisted of about 33 percent of the population. The country of Jordan was created out of the region east of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. The city of Jerusalem was to remain under the administrative control of the UN as an international city, but later, the Jewish State of Israel was officially recognized in 1948. The Palestinians, who were a majority of Israel's total population at the time and who owned about 90 percent of the land, denounced the agreement as unacceptable (Knowledgerush). One of the consequences of the territorial partition was that thousands of Palestinian Arabs were forced off the land allocated to the

Jewish state. These Palestinians became refugees in the Palestinian portion or neighboring countries.

Palestine's Arab neighbors – Syria, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Iraq, and Egypt – sided with the Arab Palestinians and declared war on Israel. The war did not end favorably for the Arabs. With support and aid from Britain and the United States, the Jewish State of Israel defeated the attacking Arab armies and took control of a more substantial portion of the land, including some of the land designated by the UN as a portion of the Arab half.

After the Arabs lost the first war against Israel's Jewish state, the Palestinians' problems increased. By 1950 over 750,000 Palestinians living in the Jewish-controlled regions of Israel were forced out of their homes and into refugee camps. According to the UN, in 2010, about one-third of the registered Palestine refugees, more than 1.4 million, live in fifty-eight recognized refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Jordan has the highest number of Palestinian refugees: almost two million, with more than 330,000 living in refugee camps (United Nations Relief "Palestine Refugees"; United Nations Relief "Statistics"). Jordan has allowed most of its Palestinian refugees to receive Jordanian citizenship.

By 1967, the Arab armies had regrouped and were willing to attack Israel again. The 1967 war was short-lived, lasting only about a week. The Arab armies were devastated once

again, and Israel gained even more territory. Israel took the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the West Bank from Jordan. The entire city of Jerusalem came under Israeli control. The 1967 war solidified the control of the region of Palestine under the Israeli government and placed Israel at higher odds with its Arab neighbors. Syria wanted Israel to return the Golan Heights, which has a strategic military advantage in overlooking northern Israel, and Egypt wanted Israel to return control of the Sinai Peninsula.

Egypt and Syria attacked Israel again on October 6, 1973, which was Yom Kippur, the Jewish religion's most solemn holiday. The Israeli army counterattacked, driving the Syrians out and the Egyptian army and back across the Suez Canal. After a few weeks of conflict, a peace treaty was agreed upon. In 1977, Israeli president Menachem Begin and Egyptian president Anwar Sadat were invited to Camp David, Maryland, by US president Jimmy Carter. Israel and Egypt signed the Camp David Accord, an agreement not to go to war again. Egypt agreed to recognize the State of Israel officially and not to invade Israel again. Israel agreed to return the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt; the peninsula was returned in 1982. Each participant in the accord won the Nobel Peace Prize.

In 1980, Israel passed the Jerusalem Law, which stated that greater Jerusalem as Israeli territory and that Jerusalem was the eternal capital of the State of Israel. The UN rejected

Israel's claim on greater Jerusalem, and few if any countries have accepted it. Israel moved its capital from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem to solidify its claim on the city even though most of the world's embassies remain in Tel Aviv. The move of the capital was designed to create a forward capital, usually either to protect a nation's territory or to spur the country's development. In this case, it was to protect valuable territory.

Palestinians were left with only the regions of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, controlled by the Israeli government and subject to Israel's national jurisdiction. As of 2010, about 1.5 million Palestinians live in the Gaza Strip, and 2.5 million live in the West Bank. Several cities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been turned over to the Palestinian Authority (PA) for self-governing. The PA was established between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Israeli government to administer internal security and civil matters. The PLO and the PA are two separate entities. The PLO is the internationally recognized governing body of the Palestinian people. It is legitimately recognized by the UN to represent the area known as Palestine in political matters. There are two main political parties within the PLO: Hamas and Fatah. The Hamas party is the strongest in the Gaza Strip region, and the Fatah party is more prominent in the West Bank.

Possible Solutions for Israelis and Palestinians

The future of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has been the focus of talks and negotiation for decades. There are various ways to approach this issue; a one-state solution and a two-state solution have been proposed. The one-state solution proposes creating a fully democratic state of Israel and the integration of all the people within its borders into one country. Integration of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank into the Jewish State of Israel is part of this plan; in other words, “Take the walls down and create one state” (Masri, M., 2011). Many Palestinians support the one-state solution, but most of the Jewish population does not. Family size is much more abundant in the Palestinian side, so it would be a matter of time before the Jewish population would be a minority and would not have full political control with a democratic government. To have the Jewish State of Israel, the Jewish population needs to keep its status as the majority.

In a two-state solution, Palestinians would have their nation-state, including the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The rest of the former Palestine would be included in the Jewish State of Israel. The two-nation concept (Israel and a Palestinian state) has been proposed and supported by several foreign governments, including the United States. Implementation of a two-state solution is, of course, not without its inherent problems. At present, the West Bank and

the Gaza Strip are subjects under the Jewish State of Israel without full political or economic autonomy. The two-state solution would buy more time for the Jewish population with smaller families to retain power as a majority political voting bloc.

Parties to the negotiations have acknowledged that the most likely solution is to create a Palestinian state bordering Israel. However, it is not clear how to make this happen. Palestine is now divided between the Jewish State of Israel (with 7.3 million people) on one side and the Palestinians (with 4.0 million people) in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. About 75 percent of Israel's population of 7.3 million people are Jewish, and about 25 percent are Arab. Travel between Israel and the Palestinian areas is heavily restricted and tightly controlled. A high concrete and barbed wire barrier separates the two sides for much of the border. The West Bank provides freshwater used on the Israeli side for agriculture and industrial processes. The industries also employ Palestinians and support them economically.

Jewish people from various parts of the world continue to migrate to Israel, and the Israeli government continues to build housing settlements. Since the West Bank region is under the Israeli national jurisdiction, many new housing settlements have been built in the West Bank. The Palestinians who live there strongly oppose the settlements. In 1977, only about five thousand Jews lived in the West Bank settlements. As of 2010, there were more than two hundred thousand.

The Palestinians argue that if they were to have their nation-state, then the Jewish settlements would be in their country and would have to be either resettled or absorbed. Israel responds by indicating that the two-state solution is indefensible because the Jewish settlements in the West Bank cannot be protected if the West Bank is separated from Israel.

The issues in Israel are generally complicated. After a series of wars and considerable negotiations, the central problems remain: Jews and Palestinians both want the same land, both groups want Jerusalem to be their capital city, and neither group can find a compromise. Support for Israel's Jewish state has primarily come from the United States and Jewish groups external to Israel. There are more Jews in the United States than there are in Israel, and the US Jewish lobby is powerful. Israel has been the top recipient of US foreign aid for most of the years since 1948. Through charitable donations, US groups provide Israel additional billions of dollars annually. For many European countries, foreign aid has given the Jewish population in Israel a higher standard of living than the standard of living.

In the past decade, most of the PLO's operating budget has come from external sources. Arab neighbors provide millions of dollars annually. Though Iran is not Arab, they have provided aid to the Palestinian cause in support of fellow Muslims against the Jewish State of Israel. The PLO has received the bulk of its funding from the European Union. Russia has also provided millions of dollars in aid. The United

States provides millions in direct or indirect aid to the Palestinians annually.

The Gaza Strip is one of the most densely populated regions on Earth, and it is located in a desert. There are few jobs and no real methods of gaining wealth. Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip or the West Bank need to rely on outside support to survive. These are small areas with lots of people. The West Bank is only about thirty miles wide by seventy-five miles long, yet more than 2.5 million people call it home. The Gaza Strip is a desert region about six miles wide by twenty-three miles long and is home to more than 1.5 million people. In 2010, the West Bank's family size was about 3.2, and in the Gaza Strip, it was about 5.0. Unemployment rates averaged about 40 percent in the Gaza Strip and over 20 percent in the West Bank (Central Intelligence Agency). Underemployment is also a significant issue because there may be few employment opportunities for professionals with specialized skills or a university degree in a specific field of interest.

In 2006, both Israel and the PLO held democratic elections for their leaders. In 2006, a candidate from the Hamas party won the PLO leadership, which concerned many of the PLO's external financial supporters. The Israeli government characterizes Hamas as a terrorist organization that supports the destruction of the State of Israel. Hamas has advocated for suicide bombers to blow themselves up on populated Jewish streets. The Jewish State of Israel has been fighting a low-level war against Palestinian resistance groups such as Hamas since

1948. In 2008, the Fatah party leaders, which are more prominent in the West Bank region, took matters to the PLO Central Council, which made Mahmoud Abbas president of the State of Palestine.

The problems between Israel and Palestinians are far from settled. The region has plenty of interconnected concerns. The most prominent supporter of Israel, the United States, invaded Iraq in 2003, an invasion that raised the concern of Islamic groups in the Middle East, including the Islamic leaders that control the government of Iran. Israel has nuclear weapons, and Iran has worked at developing nuclear weapons. US involvement in the region has heightened tensions between Iran and Israel. Oil revenues are driving the economies of most of the Arab countries that support the Palestinians. Oil is an essential export of the region, with the United States as a significant market. The difficulties between Israel and the Palestinians continue to fuel the conflict between Islamic fundamentalists and Islamic reformers. Some Islamic groups have accepted Israel's status as a country, and others have not. The Israel-Palestinian problem drives the geopolitics of the Middle East. The US war in Iraq has complicated the situation but has not superseded it. The situation in Palestine is predicted to continue long after the problems in Iraq have stabilized.

Jordan

North of the Arabian Peninsula is three Arab states that surround Israel: Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. Each country possesses its own unique physical and cultural geography. The country of Jordan was created through the British Mandate after World War I when Britain defeated the Turks in Palestine. The area east of the Jordan River became the modern country of Jordan in 1946. From 1953 to 1999, during the most volatile period of the region, the country was ruled by a pragmatic leader, King Hussein, who was able to negotiate his way through the complicated relationship with Israel skillfully and yet keep his country stable. When Palestine was divided by the UN to create the State of Israel, the region of Jordan received more than a million Palestinian refugees from the West Bank and Israel. Refugees make up a large portion of the more than six million people living in Jordan; about half of the total refugees from the US war in Iraq are included.

Jordan is not extensive in physical area. Natural resources such as oil and water are not abundant here, and the country often has to rely on international aid to support its economy. Inflation, poverty, and unemployment are fundamental issues. The government of Jordan is a constitutional monarchy. King Hussein's son 'Abdullah II took power after the king's death in 1999. Economic reforms were implemented by King 'Abdullah II to improve the country's

long-term outlook and raise the standard of living for his citizens. The king allowed municipal elections to be conducted, which allowed for 20 percent of the positions to be dedicated to women candidates. A democratic vote held parliamentary elections.

Jordan has demonstrated how a country with few natural resources in a volatile region can proceed down a progressive path despite difficult circumstances. Jordan has developed a positive trade relationship with Europe and the United States while also working with its Arab neighbors to access oil and maintain a civil state of affairs. Jordan is not without its challenges but has managed to confront each issue yet retain a sense of stability and nationalism.

Syria

The strategically located country of Syria is at the center of the Middle East's geopolitical issues. Syria gained its independence from the French Mandate in 1946, the same year as Jordan. Syria has strived to work out and stabilize its political foundation. In a move to create greater Arab unity in the realm, Egypt and Syria joined forces and created the United Arab Republic in 1958. This geopolitical arrangement lasted until 1961 when the partnership was dissolved. Syria returned to its republic. The Arab Socialist Baath Party gained strength, and in 1970 Hafiz al-Assad, of the Alawite minority

(an offshoot branch of Shia Islam making up about 10 percent of the Syrian population), took over leadership in a coup that stabilized the political scene. During this era, the Golan Heights was lost to Israel in the Arab-Israeli War of 1967. This strategic geographical location is a point of contention in the peace negotiations between Syria and Israel.

Hafiz al-Assad served as the leader of Syria for twenty-nine years without being democratically elected by the people. His son Bashar took the reins of leadership after Hafiz died in 2000. The Alawite sect held power in Syria through the Assad family under military control. Syria has been accused of using its military power to influence conditions in Lebanon, where it brokered a peace deal in its civil war (1975–1990). Syria has also been accused of supporting the anti-Israel groups headquartered in Lebanon.

Syria is located in an ancient land with a long history of empires and peoples. The region of Syria was once part of the cradle of civilization that sprung up in Mesopotamia. Damascus claims to have been continually inhabited longer than any other capital city on Earth. Aleppo, the largest city and the center of industrial activity, lies in the north of Syria. Syria's physical area is slightly larger than the US state of North Dakota. Overall, Syria's climate is characterized as an arid type B climate; some regions receive more rain than others. The western region, because it borders the Mediterranean Sea, is an area that receives more rainfall. The additional rainfall translates into extensive agricultural

production. The northeast area of Syria is also productive agriculturally through water resources provided where the Euphrates River cuts through the country. Oil and natural gas have been the country's main export products. The petroleum reserves are being depleted, and few new fields are being developed. Eventually, the wealth generated by the sale of petroleum reserves, which are finite resources, is projected to diminish, even as the population continues to increase.

The Syrian government has exerted strict control over the economy, restricting economic growth or development and causing a high unemployment rate. Because oil production has not been increasing, the government has been forced to take on the additional national debt. The arid climate and the need to supplement agriculture production have placed additional pressure on precious freshwater supplies. The Euphrates River provides freshwater, but it originates in Turkey, where large dams restrict the flow. Water rights for the region are, therefore, an issue. One-third of Syria's population is under the age of fifteen, which indicates a rapid population growth pattern that will tax future resources at an increasing rate. In 2010, Syria had about twenty-two million people. The country holds political significance; its strategic location between Iraq and Israel makes it a vital player in any solution for lasting peace in the Middle East.

The Arab Spring and Syrian Civil War

Syria has experienced protests and demonstrations similar to those that swept through North Africa in the Arab Spring of 2011. Citizens expressed dissatisfaction with the government because of the lack of democratic reforms, high unemployment, and civil rights loss, which had been taken away when the government declared a state of emergency in 1963. Student protests escalated to massive citizen demonstrations that emerged in various Syrian cities in the spring of 2011. The government cracked down on protesters, killing some. After extensive demonstrations on March 15, the government arrested more than three thousand people. Hundreds have been killed in violent clashes between the people and government security forces.

President Bashar al Assad's government's lack of democratic processes has continued to prompt protests and demonstrations in Syria. The US government eventually placed sanctions against Assad and several high-level Syrian officials. A new cabinet was installed in Syria, and the decades-old state of emergency was rescinded. Unrest and protests by the people continue, and the government responds by cracking down on them with harsher methods. Syria's neighbors and various European nations have increased sanctions and denounced the Assad regime, which has increased the pressure on Syria. While on the other end of the

Middle East Cold War, Russia has supported the Syrian government.

The uprising in Syria that started as a part of the wave of the Arab Spring continues. The Arab Spring protests and demonstrations in Syria have often been compared to those in Libya. Both Syria and Libya have had long-time leaders who ruled for decades without democratic reforms or widespread personal freedoms. The difference is that in Syria, the Assad regime has held total control over a vast military and comprehensive control over political and economic activities. This is unlike Libya under Muammar Gadhafi, whose modest military forces included mercenaries from other countries, and the government had a fragmented or weak political structure. Speculation regarding changes in the government and the future of Syria is more complicated.

Despite widespread initial protests and calls for a change in leadership, president Bashar al-Assad refused to step down but violently opposed protestors. Syria has been ruled by the Ba'ath political party, a socialist and nationalist group seeking Arab unity, since the 1960s. Bashar al-Assad was elected president under a 2000 referendum and ran unopposed, giving some indicators of the country's lack of political freedom. Soldiers were ordered to open fire on civilian protestors, and many were killed or tortured. Eventually, the country declined into civil war, with the government fighting rebel groups who sought to overthrow it and civilians caught in the crossfire.

Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)

The civil war in Syria also offered another group in the region the opportunity to control territory. ISIS, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, also known as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or just the Islamic State (IS), emerged in 2014 as a Sunni extremist group opposing the United States' invasion of Iraq. The minority Sunni population had ruled Iraq for centuries, but with the overthrow of then-president Saddam Hussein, a member of the Ba'ath Party, the majority Shia population took control. Efforts to create a coalition government and include Sunnis and the other minority groups in the country, broke down. Some of the Sunnis who had been political leaders or military personnel under Saddam Hussein formed ISIS and were eventually able to drive out Iraqi government forces in several key cities.

From there, the group gained control of parts of Syria. For some time, much of Iraq and Syria existed as an, a territory beyond the control of government forces. ISIS is widely known for its brutal tactics, including beheadings, sexual violence, and fundamentalist interpretation of Islam. The group sought to create a worldwide Islamic State with every Muslim country under its control. The United States declared ISIS defeated in 2019, though researchers note that while the US indeed took control of the last pieces of territories held by ISIS, thousands of ISIS fighters remain dispersed across Iraq

and Syria, and the group has the support of other affiliate groups and fighters across the world.

Syrian Migration Crisis

Since 2011, the people of Syria have endured government assaults, violence from rebel groups, and attacks from ISIS. Over 400,000 Syrians have been killed, many of them civilians, and over 13 million have become refugees. Some refugees have remained in Syria, cut off from aid by government and insurgent groups. Around 4.8 million people have left Syria. Some have fled to Turkey and Greece by boat; many have died on the perilous journey. Europe and North America have debated whether to accept these migrants, with some countries arguing that Syrian migrants might be terrorists, and others acknowledging that the global community has a responsibility to help those in need.

Click on the image above to view a story map about the global immigration crisis, with a specific look at Syria.

Lebanon

Phoenicians created an empire along the Mediterranean coast of present-day Lebanon four thousand years ago, and many armies fought over the strategically located region. After the demise of the Ottoman Empire, the area became a European

protectorate under the French Mandate. The French granted independence in 1943.

Lebanon is smaller than the US state of Connecticut, with a population of about four million. The country's high central mountain chain, the Lebanon Mountains, reaches as much as ten thousand feet in elevation. At these elevations, precipitation turns to snow and allows the operation of ski resorts. To the east of the central range is the fertile Bekaa Valley, which plays a vital role in the country's agriculture. On the eastern side of the Bekaa Valley is another shorter mountain range that borders Syria.

Following World War II, Beirut, the capital city of Lebanon, became known as the "Paris of the Middle East," complete with Western-style night clubs and a jet-setting business class. In the past, Lebanon was called the "Switzerland of the Middle East" because of its capabilities in banking and finance, supported by a relatively stable political climate. Unfortunately, stable and progressive conditions were not enough to keep the country from escalating into division and civil war in the 1970s.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, internal tensions were building between the many religious and cultural factions competing for Lebanon's power. By the early 1970s, the minority Christian government clashed with a majority Muslim population. Many factions entered the arena on both the Christian and Muslim sides. On the Christian side are Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant factions. The Islamic side

includes the Sunni, the Shia, and the Druze, a semi-Islamic offshoot group that incorporates Gnostic or neo-Platonic philosophies.

Lebanon experienced a full-scale civil war by 1975 that continued until 1990 when the Syrian military brokered a peace deal. By the time it ended, the bitter civil war had destroyed the infrastructure of the country. Only one-third of Beirut's population remained. The former thriving city had been reduced to a collection of bullet-ridden empty buildings. It took over a decade, but through the resiliency of the people, Beirut rebounded and continues to recover. A massive rebuilding program has resurrected the city of Beirut and stimulated the economy.

Still, conflicts linger, and discord between Israel and Syria has violent results. Israel has taken military action against anti-Israel factions within Lebanon on several occasions. In 1982, Israel attacked PLO strongholds, operating out of Lebanon in the Bekaa Valley and West Beirut. In 1993, Israel conducted air raids and military strikes against guerilla bases in Southern Lebanon. Anti-Israel groups such as Hezbollah operate out of Lebanon and receive aid from other Arab states, a source of contention that has prompted Israel to confront Hezbollah on Lebanon's territory. As a result, Lebanon has become a battleground on which factions try to work out their differences. Syria's continual intervention in Lebanon has sometimes been unappreciated; in 2004, massive

demonstrations advocated for the removal of all Syrian troops. Syria withdrew its forces in 2005.

There is no dominant majority political party in Lebanon to coalesce power. Lebanon consequently developed a unique parliamentary democratic system to relieve some tension between the various cultural-political factions. In this system, several positions in government are reserved for specific religious/political parties. The deputy prime minister position, for example, is reserved for an Orthodox Christian; the prime minister is a Sunni Muslim; the speaker of the parliament is a Shia Muslim, and the president can only be a Maronite Catholic Christian.

Lebanon's cultural and religious factions within its small state clash with political fervor and conviction, at times creating chaotic conditions that interrupt economic growth and discourage international investments. Add the dynamic cultural conditions to Lebanon's attractive physical features – the beautiful Mediterranean coast, the beautiful interior mountains, and Beirut's cosmopolitan city – and it is easy to see why Lebanon is such a fascinating geographic study. Lebanon holds a unique location and position in the Middle East that will remain a focus of interest to the rest of the world.

6.6 ARABIAN PENINSULA

The Arabian Peninsula is a desert environment surrounded by saltwater bodies. The Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, and the Red Sea border the peninsula on three sides. Arid type B climates dominate the region. Saudi Arabia only receives an average of four inches of precipitation per year. The southern portions of the peninsula are some of the hottest places on Earth. In the south, summer temperatures can reach more than 120° F. is the Rub' al-Khali (Empty Quarter), which is mainly desert, comprises about 25 percent of Saudi Arabia. It is extremely dry and virtually uninhabited, though oil discoveries have brought temporary settlements to the region. There are no natural lakes or significant rivers on the peninsula. Agricultural activity is dependent on the availability of water by rainfall, underground aquifers, oases, or desalinization of seawater.

Most of the people living on the peninsula are Arabs, and most of the peninsula's countries are ruled by monarchs who rely on oil revenues to gain wealth. Minerals are mined in the mountains that dominate the peninsula's western and southern regions. The highest peaks reach more than twelve thousand feet in elevation in northern Yemen. Of the

countries on the peninsula, Yemen has the fewest oil resources and has had the sole democratically elected government. Saudi Arabia dominates the region in size and oil resources. Islam, the dominant religion, infiltrates all aspects of Arab culture.

Saudi Arabia

The holy cities of Medina and Mecca are in Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Islam. Islam first united the many traditional groups of Arabia with religion and then with the Arabic language. The region was further united after 1902 when Abdul Aziz Al-Sa'ud and his followers captured Riyadh's city and brought it under the control of the House of Sa'ud. In 1933, the lands under the control of the king had renamed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy. In 1938, US oil corporation Chevron found large quantities of oil in the region, which has sustained the royal family ever since. Aramco is the state-run oil corporation. Controlling about one-fifth of the world's known oil reserves, the Saudi royal family claims considerable power.

The Saudi royal family gave haven to thousands of Kuwaitis, including the emir and his family, during the First Persian Gulf War (1991). Saudi Arabia allowed the US and Western military forces to use bases on its soil during Operation Desert Storm. Acquiescence to non-Muslims operating military bases on the same soil as the holy cities of

Mecca and Medina gave extremist groups a reason to engage in terrorist activities. Out of the nineteen hijackers in the 9-11 attack in New York, sixteen were from Saudi Arabia. The Saudi government has been forced to step up its efforts against terrorism and domestic extremist groups.

The economy of Saudi Arabia is based on the export of oil, and more than 20 percent of the known oil reserves in the world are located in Saudi Arabia. The country is a crucial member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and has been the world's number one oil exporter. Millions of foreign workers in the petroleum industry make up a vital component of the country's economy.

A high rate of population growth has been outstripping economic growth in Saudi Arabia. In 2010, more than one-third of the population was younger than fifteen years old, and family size was about 3.8 children. The unemployment rate is high, and there is a shortage of job skills in the workforce. The government has been working to shift its focus away from a petroleum-based economy and increase other economic opportunities; it plans to heavily invest in the necessary infrastructure and education to diversify its economy.

Saudi Arabia has made several efforts to move forward and put the country more in line with globalization efforts that modernize the other Persian Gulf States. The World Trade Organization accepted Saudi Arabia as a member in 2005. In

2008, the king implemented the initiative for interfaith dialogue to address religious tolerance and acceptance. The first woman was appointed to the cabinet, and municipal councils held elections for its members.

Saudi Culture

The royal family and most of the people in Saudi Arabia are Sunni Muslims. The country has a strong fundamentalist Islamic tendency. The law of the state is strict and supports conservative Islamic ideals. The Wahhabi branch of Sunni Islam has a significant influence on culture. Activities such as gambling, alcohol consumption, and the promotion of other religions are outlawed. Islamic dietary laws forbid alcohol and pork products. Movie theaters and other Western-style productions are prohibited but can be found in areas where workers from other countries live in private compounds. Though movie theaters are restricted, movies on DVDs are not prohibited and are widely available. The dress code in Saudi Arabia strictly follows the Islamic principles of modesty. The black abaya (an article of clothing that looks like a cloak or robe) or modest clothing is appropriate for women. Men often wear the traditional full-length shirt and a headcloth held in place by a cord.

In Saudi Arabia, human rights organizations, legal associations, trade unions, and political parties are banned. The country maintains tight censorship of all local media.

The press is only allowed to publish what the government permits it to report. Communication with foreigners, satellite media, and Internet access is highly controlled. Those who speak out against the government can be arrested or imprisoned.

Sharia Law is the underlying criminal code in Saudi Arabia, along with whatever law is established by the king. A wide range of corporal and capital punishments, from lengthy prison sentences to amputations (arm or foot), floggings, and beheadings, are proscribed for legal or religious offenses. Trials are most often held in secret without lawyers. Torture has been used to force confessions that are then used to convict the accused. Torture techniques, including the use of sticks, electric shocks, or flogging, can be applied to children, women, and men. Executions are usually held in a public place every Friday.

Role of Women

Men hold the dominant roles in Saudi society. Under strict Islamic law, women do not have the same rights as men, so Saudi women do not have the opportunities that women in many Western countries have. For example, it is not customary for a woman to walk alone in public; traditionally, she must be accompanied by a family member to avoid being accused of moral offenses or prostitution. The Mutawa'een (religious police) have the authority to arrest people for such

actions. The punishment could be as many as twenty-five days in prison and flogging of as many as sixty lashes. Currently, the following restrictions have been made on women:

- Women are not allowed to drive motor vehicles.
- Women must wear modest clothing such as the black abaya and cover their hair.
- Women can only choose certain college degrees. They cannot be engineers or lawyers, for example.
- Women cannot vote in political elections.
- Women cannot walk in public spaces or travel without a male relative.
- Women are segregated from men in the workplace and in many formal spaces, even in homes.
- Women need to have written permission from a husband or father to travel abroad.
- Marriages can be arranged without the woman's consent, and women often lose everything in a divorce.

Saudi Arabia is a country steeped in tradition based on its people's heritage, and many of the traditions regarding women were implemented to protect and care for them. However, as globalization forces seep into the fabric of society, many of these traditions are evolving and changing to adapt to the times and a more open society. Women assert themselves in the culture, and many of these long-standing traditions are starting to break down. In late 2011, several women organized

to defy the ban on driving. One woman was arrested for driving a car and sentenced to ten lashes. Saudi King Abdullah then overturned the sentence and promised to support or protect women's rights. There is no law stating that women cannot drive a vehicle. The taboo is based on tradition and religious views. More women have taken to the roadways despite the taboo against it (Huffington Post). Saudi Arabia is an example of how modernity and democratic principles are challenging Islamic fundamentalism.

Kuwait

Kuwait, a small country located on the Persian Gulf, is a monarchy ruled by an emir from the royal family. Immense oil reserves have made Kuwait attractive to international oil investors. In 1961, Zapata Oil Company (now Pennzoil), owned by former US president George H. W. Bush, drilled the first offshore Kuwaiti oil well in the Persian Gulf. Thanks to ample oil revenues, the small Kuwaiti population (about three million people) has adequate social services. The country has a high standard of living. Education is free, and much of the labor base comes from non-Kuwaiti migrants. Petroleum exports account for most of the government's income.

Kuwait has an excellent port at Kuwait City. However, one of the environmental problems with building a large city in

the desert is the shortage of fresh water. To solve this problem, Kuwait has turned to seawater's desalinization to provide for its domestic, agricultural, and industrial needs.

The United States and an international coalition fought the First Persian Gulf War in 1991 to “liberate” Kuwait from the grip of Saddam Hussein. It is compelling to note that the war was not about democracy. The war was about the control of oil resources. Under Hussein, Iraq invaded Kuwait and took over its vast oil industry and port facilities. In actuality, by taking over the oil assets, Hussein took over the oil assets of various international oil corporations. With the support of the United Nations (UN) resolutions demanding that Hussein leave Kuwait, President George H. W. Bush organized an international military coalition to remove Hussein from Kuwait. The US mission was called Operation Desert Storm. The war started on bases in Saudi Arabia and pushed the Iraqi army out of Kuwait. When Hussein realized that he could not benefit from the oil in Kuwait, he had approximately 750 oil wells in Kuwait dynamited, which caused significant well fires and large lakes of oil flowing out onto the desert sands. The fires and spilled oil caused extensive environmental damage.

Kuwait was not a democracy during the Persian Gulf War and is not a true democracy today. It is considered a constitutional emirate. The emir, or head of the royal family, is the head of state. He appoints the prime minister and has a high level of control over the government. The emir has the

authority to dissolve the National Assembly, which has members that hold seats by election. Several groups wish to have a political voice in the government, including Islamists, business merchants, secular liberals, Shia activists, and a small number of local groups. Islamist groups are usually those who support an Islamic religious state as the desired type of government.

Kuwait had to invest nearly five billion dollars in reestablishing the oil industry after the Persian Gulf War, but the emirate has recovered, and its economy is growing with the increased sale of exported oil. Kuwait has about 104 billion barrels of oil in known reserves. In 2010, the four largest export partners were Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore, which are all economic powers in East Asia that have to import almost all of their energy and raw materials. The US has traditionally been Kuwait's number one source of imported goods.

Bahrain

Bahrain is a small archipelago, group of islands, in the Persian Gulf, that received its independence from Great Britain in 1971. Iran has made claims on the islands to no avail. Similar to other small monarchies in the region, Bahrain has lots of oil and a small population. Though more than 50 percent of the population is Shia, the country is opening up to democratic

reforms. In 1999, elections were approved for a parliament, all political prisoners were released, and women were allowed to vote. The royal family, ruled by the king, has had an enormous degree of power over its government. Officially, Bahrain is a constitutional monarchy, but the king appoints the upper house members in its bicameral legislature. The first female was appointed to a cabinet position in 2004, which indicated the move toward openness to the globalization process and modernization. Some in the country think the implementation of these measures is still too slow.

Most of Bahrain's wealth is gained through the extraction of natural resources. Enormous natural gas reserves are located in Bahrain's coastal waters, and oil now makes up about 60 percent of the export profits. The country's small land area, lack of sufficient supplies of fresh water, and few other natural resources have prompted a shift for Bahrain to expand into the financial sector. Islamic banking and financial services for the global marketplace have been an expanding sector of the economy. The objective of diversifying the economy is to reduce the dependency on oil as a future source of national wealth. Also, the United States has entered into a free-trade agreement with Bahrain, which has attracted multinational corporations to do business in the region. Bahrain has supported a US military presence for both protection and cooperation and is the permanent headquarters for the US Fifth Fleet naval operations. In a mutual defense agreement, some one-thousand American

naval officers and personnel are stationed on the island. Bahrain has been a frontline state for the US military in the Iraq War and the war in Afghanistan.

The country is also opening up development in the service sectors. Tourism is not what usually comes to mind when one thinks about the Arabian Peninsula, but Bahrain has been attracting millions of visitors yearly. The country's authentic heritage is attractive to tourists from neighboring Arab states and the global community. The country boasts of nearly five thousand years of human activity. UNESCO has designated the Qal' at al-Bahrain castle as a World Heritage Site. The country has invested heavily in modern shopping malls and international sports facilities to modernize its country and attract more international events.

The citizens of Bahrain have had to balance the shift toward modernization and globalization with the strong Arab heritage and Islamic beliefs that have been the foundation of their culture. The term Middle East Lite has been applied to Bahrain because Bahrain has been investing in modern infrastructure but has worked hard to maintain its Arab heritage with a Persian Gulf identity that is more accepting and open to the outside world. The growing and prosperous middle class are more tolerant and liberal than many of its Middle East neighbors.

The same level of tolerance toward outsiders has not been witnessed within the country. The 2011 protests and demonstrations that swept across North Africa and the

Middle East also occurred in Bahrain. The king, the royal family, and the majority in government follow the Sunni branch of Islam; however, most of the population follows the Shia branch of Islam. Many within the Shia community felt that they were being discriminated against and protested the lack of democratic reforms. Protests and demonstrations in Bahrain have prompted the government to call in military support from Saudi Arabia to help quell the uprising. Several Shia mosques were reported to have been destroyed, and police detained hundreds of people. The protests and demonstrations in Bahrain are more than just a conflict between Shia and Sunni, though this split has been a significant concern for years. Many Sunni have participated in the demonstrations because they are in support of more democratic reforms as well.

Qatar

The small peninsula jutting out from Arabia into the Persian Gulf is an Arab land in transition. Ruled by an emir who has supported democratic reforms, Qatar is moving forward with a globalization policy similar to other Westernized nations. Many of these reforms are similar to those in Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Oil and gas exports have fueled a building boom that has produced shopping malls, wide boulevards, and even a large US military base. Women are

allowed to vote, Western clothing and products are permitted, and rap music can be heard in the streets. Though still politically restrictive in many ways, Qatar is more open than many of its neighbors. Qatar is also home to the Al Jazeera news organization, which often balances out Western news programming. Al Jazeera is also allowed to report critically on its home country.

In the past few years, oil revenues have provided Qatar with a rapidly growing economy and a high standard of living. Proven reserves of oil and natural gas are enormous for such a small country. Qatar's natural gas reserves are the world's third-largest. Qatar has been pursuing the development of private and foreign investments in non-energy-related businesses, including banking and financial institutions.

Modernization efforts have supported Qatar's push for a greater emphasis on education. Infrastructure and financial support have been allocated to support educational reform, and university opportunities are expanding rapidly. Qatar University was founded in 1973, and the last decade, many more universities from Western countries have opened up branch campuses in Education City, which was established to advance Qatar's educational reform goals. The emir's second wife has actively promoted educational reforms and has encouraged women to pursue higher education to excel in their careers. She has also created greater visibility for women in public roles and has broken through some of the cultural

barriers and taboos that have restricted women in other conservative Islamic Arab countries.

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Seven small Arab Emirates joined together in 1971 to form the UAE. Each emirate is an absolute monarchy ruled by a sheik. The UAE has been integrating its economy with the global marketplace and has established a high standard of living. Two of the Emirates – Abu Dhabi and Dubai – possess most of the oil reserves. Abu Dhabi is the capital city and consists of 87 percent of the land area in the UAE. The head of the royal family in this emirate is considered the head of state for the UAE.

Dubai has turned its small emirate into an international trade center. The emirate has used its oil reserves to promote trade and commerce. Dubai built itself a world-class port facility equaling that of Hong Kong or New York. As a free-trade zone, there are no taxes or tariffs, so international corporations use the location as a trade center to bring high-volume buyers and sellers together. Dubai has been looking ahead to its future when the oil runs out. The creation of an international trade center would be a means to gain economic income when the revenue from the sale of oil diminishes.

Oil wealth and the need for workers have opened up economic opportunities in the UAE that have attracted

laborers and business people from many parts of the world. Noncitizens make up about 80 percent of the population; about half the noncitizens are from South Asia, and many are Muslims from India. A large number of laborers required to develop the infrastructure have created an imbalance between the percentage of men and women. There is about twice the number of men than there are women in Dubai. This has created an interesting dynamic for women in Dubai who have more rights and opportunities than those in more conservative Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia. The UAE presents an excellent example of people migrating from peripheral countries to a core region in search of opportunities and advantages in a globalized economic community.

The UAE has invested its oil income in building up its infrastructure to compete in a global economy. Hundreds of billions of dollars of construction projects are underway in Dubai alone. Dubai has the world's tallest structure, the most expensive hotel, the world's most expensive airport (when completed), and its largest artificial islands. Dubai is even home to an indoor downhill ski resort complete with real snow. Other ventures, such as the Dubailand entertainment complex and Dubai Sports City, have also been proposed. The downturn in the world's economic situation has slowed the development in this emirate but has not diminished its future perspective.

Oman

Ruled by a sultan, the absolute monarchy of Oman on the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula also controls the tip of land next to the Strait of Hormuz. All oil tankers leaving the Persian Gulf must pass through this vital choke point.

Mountains reach more than nine thousand feet in the eastern region of Oman, and rugged, arid central plains cover the central region. The country gets plenty of sunshine and has some excellent beaches. Annual rainfall varies from four inches or fewer in the eastern sector to as much as twenty-five inches in the southwest. The climate is generally hot: temperatures can reach 120 °F from May to September.

Oman has been using its oil income to build infrastructure to benefit its people. The Sultan of Oman has widespread support from his people and has built up goodwill from the international community for his country's investments. He has built a free-trade zone with a large container port facility, luxury tourist hotels, a reliable road system, and a first-rate international airport. He has also provided clean drinking water to the rural areas. Though Oman is not a democracy, the sultan has been a positive role model for other monarchs. He has used Oman's oil wealth to help his country develop and modernize. The mountains of Oman have additional natural resources such as gold, marble, and copper.

A lack of fresh water is a concern for Oman. The nation has limited renewable water resources. More than 90 percent

of the water available is used in agriculture, and the rest is used for industry and domestic consumption. Freshwater is piped throughout most of the country, but shortages occur at times because of droughts and limited rainfall. Environmental problems have also arisen in Oman. For example, irrigation operations have caused soil conditions such as a salt buildup. Oil tankers traveling through the Strait of Hormuz and along the Gulf of Oman have leaked oil, which has washed up on coastal areas where attractive beaches are located. The higher level of the environment's exploitation by a growing population has taken a toll on the organisms that live in the fragile desert ecosystems. Mammals, birds, and other organisms are in danger of extinction, including the Arabian leopard, the mountain gazelle, and the Arabian oryx. The country may lose its biodiversity unless action is taken toward preservation.

Yemen

Yemen is a mountainous country bordering Oman and Saudi Arabia. The tallest mountains on the peninsula, reaching more than twelve thousand feet in elevation, are located here. The four central regions of Yemen are the eastern desert region of the Rub' al Khali; the Eastern Highlands south of the Rub' al Khali; the Western Highlands, which have the highest peaks; and the western coastal plains. The Western

Highlands receive about thirty inches of rain per year, while the eastern desert received almost no rainfall. Many volcanic islands are located off the coast. A volcano on one of the islands erupted as recently as 2007. This region is an extension of the rift valley system coming out of East Africa.

Click on the image above to view a story map on Yemen.

The economy has traditionally been based on agriculture. Most of the farmland is in the form of terraces cut into the mountainsides that trap rainwater as it flows down the slope from one terrace to the next. Food production is a primary concern because, in 2010, the population was more than twenty-four million and increasing rapidly. The arid land has few trees, but firewood is in high demand for cooking. The demand for firewood has caused deforestation, which has caused severe soil erosion and damage to the mountain terraces that produce the food. Yemen is facing severe environmental concerns. The fast-growing population will only put more pressure on the environmental systems. On the positive side, oil and natural gas reserves are being found in some quantities, which will assist with the economic conditions and help supply the energy needed in the future.

Women in Yemen do not have the opportunities available in some of the more urbanized and modernized Gulf States. The contrast between the rural dynamics of Yemen and the urban culture of Dubai provides an excellent example of a rural versus urban or a core versus peripheral spatial relationship. The basic formula of family size and income

levels applies to Yemen. In 2010, the fertility rate declined to 4.8 from more than 7.0 in 2000 (IndexMundi). The Rural-to-urban shift is causing cities within Yemen to grow at an increasing rate. Large family sizes are forcing young people to seek opportunities and advantages in the cities or other countries. The situation will only intensify, as Yemen's population is projected to reach sixty million by 2050 at the current rate of increase.

Yemen has a democratically elected government that came about when North Yemen and South Yemen merged into one country to create a democratic republic in 1990. The population of Yemen is about 40 percent Shia and 60 percent Sunni. Yemen sided with Iraq and Saddam Hussein in Kuwait in the First Persian Gulf War, which resulted in Saudi Arabia expelling thousands of Yemeni workers. Yemen and Saudi Arabia have had a long-standing territorial dispute and only recently agreed on the desert border between the two countries. As the lone democracy on the peninsula, Yemen contrasts with the more conservative Islamic states and monarchies such as Saudi Arabia that are more common in the Middle East. Poor, rural, and agriculturally based, Yemen does not fit the mold of the region's typical oil-rich sheikdom.

The cultural forces within Yemen demonstrate the dichotomy between modernization with democratic reforms and fundamentalist Islamic tendencies. Stability in Yemen is critical for the security of the regional waterways. In the past decade, piracy against ships off the coast of Somalia has

increased, and many ships have been boarded and taken hostage by pirates demanding high ransoms for the release of the ship and crew. Security in the region is critical to support safe passage for international shipping activity through the Gulf of Aden and the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait.

Click on the image above to view another story map on the “crisis in Yemen.”

Yemen Civil War

Yemen experienced civil unrest and citizen protests in the spring of 2011, similar to those in the other Arab countries. The protests and demonstrations targeted political corruption, economic conditions, and high unemployment. During this time, the government was also looking to modify its constitution. This helped spur protesters to shift their focus for Yemen’s president to resign after twenty-one years. The president and government resisted, and the conflicts turned more serious. Clans not loyal to the president sided with the protesters, and the Yemeni president was seriously injured in a military clash. He was flown to Saudi Arabia for medical treatment. When the president recovered and returned to Yemen, he still refused to step down. The country continues to adjust to the situation.

6.7 IRAQ, TURKEY, AND IRAN

Iraq

Iraq lies in the Fertile Crescent between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, where the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia were established. Ancient cities such as Nineveh, Ur, and Babylon were located here. Present-day Iraq and Kuwait were established out of the British Mandate territory gained following Britain's defeat of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. Britain established straight-line political boundaries between Iraq and Jordan, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. These types of boundaries are called geometric boundaries because they do not follow any physical features. In 1961, when Britain withdrew from the region, the emir controlling the southern region bordering the Persian Gulf requested that Britain separate his oil-rich kingdom as an independent country. This country became Kuwait, and the rest of the region became Iraq. After a series of governments in Iraq, the Baath party came to power in 1968, paving the way for Saddam Hussein to gain power in 1979.

Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988)

In 1980, a disagreement arose over the Shatt al-Arab waterway in the Persian Gulf on the border between Iraq and Iran, and the feud led to war between the two countries. The people of Iran are not Arabs; their ethnic background is Persian. Most Iranians are Shia Muslims, while Saddam Hussein and his Baath party were Arabs and Sunni Muslims. Ethnic and religious differences thus fueled the conflict, and the Shatt al-Arab waterway was quickly filled with wrecked ships. The local battle escalated into an all-out war, which ended in 1988 without anyone declaring a victory. The Iran-Iraq War was as close to World War III as the world has ever seen, with more than a million casualties and a cost of more than one hundred billion dollars. World powers aligned themselves with one side or the other. Before the war, the Iranian government had been taken over by Islamic fundamentalists who opposed the US intervention in the region; therefore, in the Iran-Iraq War, the United States supported Hussein and provided him with industrial supplies and materials.

Persian Gulf War (1990-1991)

After the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam Hussein looked to Kuwait to gain new oil wealth and expand access to the Persian Gulf. By taking over Kuwait, Iraq would gain an important port on the Persian Gulf and earn more income from oil reserves.

Hussein accused Kuwait of slant drilling oil wells along the Iraqi border and removing oil that was legally Iraq's. It was common knowledge that both sides were engaged in this practice, but it was the excuse Hussein needed to invade Kuwait and reclaim it as the nineteenth province of Iraq.

In 1990, the Iraqi military invaded and occupied Kuwait. Though the world community opposed this action, it was not until Hussein nationalized all the oil assets of the international oil corporations that resistance was organized. Under the leadership of US President George H. W. Bush, the United Nations (UN) organized a military coalition to remove Hussein from Kuwait. On January 16, 1991, Operation Desert Storm began. After forty-five days of fighting, Iraq was overwhelmingly defeated, and its military was ousted from Kuwait. This was a significant victory for the coalition. It was during this time that President Bush publicly announced the emergence of the potential New World Order. Kuwait was not a democracy but a monarchy ruled by an emir. The war was not a war over democracy; it was a war over the control of resources.

When it became evident that Hussein would lose Kuwait, his forces dynamited all the oil facilities and set all the oil wells in Kuwait on fire. His position was that if he could not have the oil, then nobody would. This was one of the worst environmental catastrophes regarding oil on record. Oil flowed into the Persian Gulf and covered the water's surface up to three feet thick. Most mammals, birds, and organisms living

on the water's surface died. Oil flowed out onto the desert, sand into large petroleum lakes, and the air pollution caused by burning oil wells dimmed the sun and caused severe health problems.

Ethnic and Cultural Divisions

To keep Iraq from breaking apart after Operation Desert Storm, coalition forces allowed Hussein to remain in power. Ethnically and religiously, Iraq is divided into three primary groups that generally do not get along. Sunni Arabs dominate central Iraq in a region often referred to as the Sunni Triangle, which includes the three cities of Baghdad, Tikrit (Hussein's hometown), and Ramadi. Sunnis were the most loyal to the Hussein government. In most of Iran's population, southeastern Iraq is dominated by Arabs who follow the Shia division of Islam. A group that is ethnically Kurdish and follows the Sunni division dominates northern Iraq. Kurds are not Arabs or Persians; instead, they originated from somewhere in northern Europe centuries ago with their religion, language, and customs. Many have converted to Islam.

Hussein was a Sunni Muslim, and when he was in power, he kept the other two groups in check. He used chemical weapons on the Kurds during the Iran-Iraq War. In 1988, he used chemical weapons on Halabja's Kurdish town and killed about 10 percent of the eighty thousand who lived there. Thousands

of Kurds died in other attacks, and thousands more continue to suffer serious health effects. After Operation Desert Storm, Hussein pushed the Kurds north until the UN and the United States restricted him at the thirty-sixth parallel, which became a security zone for the Kurds. The Arab Shia population in the south often clashed with Hussein's military to gain more political power, and Hussein subjected them to similar harsh conditions and treatment.

The Arab Shia population in the southeast makes up most of the Iraqi people. The two main cities of Karbala and Najaf contain holy sites for Shia followers worldwide. The Shia population is three times larger than the Kurdish population in Iraq; more Kurds live outside Iraq than live in Iraq. The Kurds are the largest nation of people in the world without a country. About twenty-five million Kurds live in the Middle East, and about fourteen million, – live in Turkey. About eight million Kurds live in Iran, about seven million live in Iraq, and a few others live in neighboring countries. At the UN's 1945 conference, they petitioned their own country, Kurdistan, carved out of Iran, Iraq, and Turkey, but were denied. Recall from "Israel and Its Neighbors," that Israel was approved to become a nation at the same UN conference.

The Iraq War (2003-2011)

After the September 11, 2001, attack on the United States, there was a renewed interest in weapons of mass destruction

(WMD). Knowing that Hussein had used chemical weapons on the Kurds, the Iranians, and the Shia, there was a concern that he would use them again. UN Weapons inspectors in Iraq never could confirm that Hussein retained WMD. They had been destroyed, moved out of Iraq, or hidden. US President George W. Bush decided to invade Iraq in 2003 to remove Hussein from power. In the invasion, Hussein's two sons were killed, and Hussein was captured. One aspect of the invasion plan was to use Iraq's vast oil reserves to help pay for the cost of the war, which quickly ballooned to more than a billion dollars a week. Fundamentalist Islamic insurgents made the war complicated.

The US invasion of Iraq brought about the removal of the Baath Party from power, and Iraq came under military occupation by a multinational coalition. An Interim Iraqi Government was formed that assumed sovereignty in 2004. A new constitution was drafted and approved by a vote of the Iraqi people. Elections were held, and a new government was formed under the newly drafted constitution. Occupying troops continued to remain as the country struggled to adapt to the reforms. Insurgencies developed that brought about an increase in violence that peaked in about 2007. By 2010, the combat operations by occupying troops were ending, and the country worked to sustain stable political conditions. Under an agreed-upon mandate, all combat troops were to withdraw as of the end of 2011. Several US troops will remain in Iraq in an advisory capacity.

Resources and Globalization

In geographic terms, the Persian Gulf War and the Iraq War were wars over resources—namely, oil. Wars have historically been fought over territory and resources. When the United States invaded in 2003, Hussein was contracting billions of dollars worth of projects to oil companies in France, Russia, and China. Other support projects were contracted out to other European countries. When the United States invaded, the contracts were summarily canceled, and British and US oil contractors took over the projects.

Iraq is an example of the second wave of globalization. Neocolonialism has been the dominant force in Iraq's economy since before the Persian Gulf War. Industrialization requires high energy demands; therefore, the industrialized countries consume energy on a massive scale. Iraq is not a core economic country, but it holds vast petroleum reserves, making it vulnerable to exploitation by industrialized core countries. It is interesting to note that the Persian Gulf War, initiated in response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, can be traced to globalism. It was Britain that established the straight-line borders separating Kuwait and Iraq. The war over Kuwait's control in 1991 was a war over the control of resources, just as the ongoing competition between Sunni Muslims and Shia Muslims, for example, is a competition for political power or resources, not competition to ethnic principles.

Hussein proved to be a destabilizing force and a potential

threat to the established so-called New World Order of global security and trade as outlined by US president George H. W. Bush. The removal of Hussein from power brought the competition between the trilateral powers of North America, Europe, and East Asia. It remains to be seen who will have control of or access to Iraq's natural resources.

Turkey

Turkey is the only remaining country of the vast Ottoman Empire, which ruled the region for seven hundred years (1299–1923 CE). When the empire was at its peak in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it controlled parts of Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and Arabia. Located on the Bosphorus, the straits that connect the Black Sea with the Mediterranean Sea, the ancient city of Constantinople was the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Called Istanbul today, this city is the largest in Turkey, but it is not the current capital. Turkey moved its capital to Ankara on the Anatolian Plateau, which is centrally located in Turkey.

Turkey has a small portion of its land area on the western side of the Bosphorus to claim its connection to Europe. Most of Turkey's land area is a part of the Asian continent, and Turkey has often been referred to as Asia Minor. Mountains on Turkey's eastern border with Armenia include Mount Ararat, which is the highest peak in the country at 16,946 feet

in elevation. Legend has it that Mount Ararat was the resting place of the legendary Noah's ark. The people of Turkey are neither Arab nor Persian; they are Turkish and speak the Turkish language. As much as 90 percent of the Turkish population is Sunni Muslim, which is similar to that of many other Muslim countries in the Middle East.

Turkey is an established secular democracy with a democratically elected political leadership. To maintain its democracy, it has had to deal with Islamic fundamentalists, who often have supported a shift to an Islamic religious state. Turkey has also had to negotiate with its neighbors, Syria and Iraq, over water rights to the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, which originate in Turkey but flow through the other countries. Turkey has built dams on these rivers, much to the dismay of its neighbors, who want to use more water.

Turkey borders northern Iraq and was home to fifty-six million Turks and fourteen million Kurds as of 2010. The Turkish government has not recognized the Kurdish claim of a homeland in eastern Turkey. Open rebellion has been expressed by Kurdish groups wishing to become independent of Turkey, but the Turkish government has oppressed any movement toward independence. Many Kurds have migrated to Istanbul in search of work. They live and work in Istanbul and send money back to their families in eastern Turkey. The large city of Diyarbakir in eastern Turkey is predominantly Kurdish and is considered by many Kurds as the city that would be their capital if they had their own Kurdistan country.

Turkey is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and has been a US ally. The United States has been allowed to have military bases in Turkey, which helped Operation Desert Storm during the First Persian Gulf War. Despite being allies, Turkey did not allow the US military to use these bases as direct invasion points when the United States invaded Iraq in 2003. The Iraq War is a primary concern for Turkey since Turkey has a significant stake in the stability of the Middle East. Possessing a small portion of its land area in Europe and being a member of NATO provides Turkey with an opening to join the European Union (EU). However, so far, it has been denied membership, mainly because of Turkey's controversial human rights record, conflicts with the Kurds, disagreements with Greece over Cyprus, and low economic indicators. Conditions are improving, and at some future point, Turkey may have an opportunity to join the EU.

To date, the EU does not have an Islamic country in its membership; Turkey may be the first. The country has various ways of gaining wealth that could help support Europe's other industrial activities. Turkey grows large quantities of food in the central Anatolian Plateau; vast fields of grain extend across this central plateau. Turkey also has some oil resources in the east and minerals in the mountains bordering Armenia and Georgia.

The island of Cyprus in the eastern Mediterranean Sea is officially a part of Europe and a member of the EU. The Green Line separates the island, monitored by the UN, which divides

the Greek-dominated south from the Turkish-dominated north. The two sides have been separated since a civil war in 1974. Turkish groups in the north have declared half of the island the independent Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Turkey is the only country that recognizes this proclamation; the rest of the world considers the whole island the Republic of Cyprus.

Iran

Iran covers a physical area more extensive than the US state of Alaska. It is a land of mountains and deserts: Iran's central and eastern regions are mainly desert with few inhabitants, and the northern and western regions of the country are mountainous. The Elburz Mountains in the north around the Caspian Sea reach as high as eighteen thousand feet in elevation near Tehran's capital city. The Zagros Mountains run along the border with Iraq and the Persian Gulf for more than nine hundred miles and can reach elevations higher than fourteen thousand feet. Similar to the Atlas Mountains in the Maghreb, Iran's mountains trap moisture, allowing minor agricultural activities in the valleys. Most of Iran's population lives in cities along with the mountain ranges. Qanats, systems of shafts or wells along mountain slopes, bring water from the mountains to the valleys for irrigation and domestic use.

Persian Empire to the Islamic Republic

Iran was once the center of the Persian Empire, which has its origins as far back as 648 BCE, and the country was called Persia until about 1935. The Ethnic Triangle of the Middle East consists of Persians in Iran, Turks in Turkey, and Arabs in Arabia. Most of the seventy million people in Iran are Persian. Iran has a long history with the ancient Persian Empire and the various conquering armies that followed it. During the rise of Islam, Iran had significant contributions to the arts, mathematics, literature, philosophy, and science. The highly advanced carpet-weaving traditions from centuries past are an example of the advancements in design and the people's technical expertise. The country's Persian identity and culture continued throughout the centuries under different ruling powers. The Persian language remains and is a branch of the Indo-European language family. Arabic is widely used as a second language and a language used in science, which helped reach a broader audience and reach out to the regional community with academic and scientific findings.

In 1971, Iran celebrated the 2,500th anniversary of Persia's first monarchy. The monarchy was ruled by a shah, a title for the sovereign leader in Iran, similar to a king. The Shah's royal family ruled Iran from 1923 to 1979, when Islamic fundamentalists took control of the government. It was during this revolution on November 4, 1979, that Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who had previously been exiled by the Shah, urged

Iranians to oppose US activities in Iran. Iranian students stormed the US embassy and took US citizens hostage. Fifty-two Americans were held for 414 days during the US presidency of Jimmy Carter, and the hostages were released the day that US president Ronald Reagan took office. Khomeini indicated he had not been aware of the students' plan but supported it. This is one reason the United States backed Saddam Hussein in the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s. Khomeini ruled Iran until he died in 1989. Since then, Iran has been an Islamic state with an ayatollah as the Supreme Leader. An ayatollah is a high-ranking Shia cleric that is an expert in the Islamic faith and the Sharia (Muslim code of law based on the Koran). There are cases where women have reached the same status as an ayatollah and known as Lady Mujtahideh. Approximately 90 percent of Iran's population follows the Shia division of Islam.

Political Changes

On the international front, Iran's leadership has indicated a drive to develop nuclear weapons and use them against Israel, which has caused concern in the global community. The government of Iran does not recognize the legitimacy of the nation of Israel. US President George W. Bush included Iran, Iraq, and North Korea, in his 2002 Axis of Evil speech, the focus of the lack of democratic freedoms, and the restrictive measures of the Islamic fundamentalist government. Iran is

similar to Saudi Arabia in its restrictions on civil rights. Many countries, including the United States, have placed trade sanctions against Iran regarding any materials associated with nuclear weapons or missiles. The US sanctions extend to an almost total trade embargo against Iran stemming from the 1979 revolution.

Open protests expressing a need for change have periodically erupted in the streets of Tehran. Ultimately, protesters are seeking personal freedoms and a more open society. The Arab Spring of 2011 was a phenomenon that spread across North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Middle East. Iran was not immune from the impact of the protests and demonstrations in their neighboring countries, but Iran was different. First of all, Iranians are not Arab but Persian in their ethnicity. Their history and heritage create a distinct identity that separates them from the rest of the region. Many Iranian citizens want the same outcomes that the protesters and demonstrators want in the countries experiencing the Arab Spring revolutions. The difference is that Iranians have been demonstrating and protesting issues with their government in the years before 2011. Political tensions in Iran have been high since the 2009 elections and even earlier. During the 2009 election in Iran, students and other individuals used the Internet, Twitter, and cell phones to organize a massive protest against the current president and in support of opposition candidates. The demonstrations were called the Twitter Revolution.

Iran is at a crossroads in the conflict between conservative Islamic fundamentalists and Islamic reformers. The government of the Islamic state is controlled by Muslim clerics who tend to be more conservative in their rulings, but the young people are mainly democratic reformers. Young people are becoming more familiar with Western culture. For example, the unofficial holiday of Valentine's Day has become extremely popular in Iran and is celebrated by a large sector of the population, mainly young people. To curb the influence of Western culture, on February 13, 2011, the government of Iran officially banned all symbols or activities associated with Valentine's Day. One claim was that the day was named after a Christian martyr and therefore was not supportive of Islam.

Economic Resources

Iran has abundant oil and natural gas reserves that are being exploited to form the base of its economy. Iran holds about 15 percent of the world's reserves of natural gas, second only to Russia (Infoplease). In 2010, the country was the fourth-largest oil exporter in the world and held about 10 percent of the world's known oil reserves (Opec.org). The UN has classified Iran's economy as semi-developed. The government has taken control of the oil and natural gas industry and implemented a type of central planning over many essential businesses. The government does not usually own small-scale agriculture and village trading activities. The Caspian Sea

provides for fishing and has oil reserves under the seabed, while oil and gas revenues make up most of the state's income. However, fluctuations in commodity prices have resulted in a more volatile income stream, and Iran's manufacturing base has been increased to support a more diversified economy.

Iran Nuclear Deal

6.8 CENTRAL ASIA

Central Asia is a region in the Asian continent that extends from the mountains of western China to the shores of the Caspian Sea. Pakistan and Iran create the southern border of the region, and Russia's vast expanse is to the north.

Afghanistan is considered a part of the region even though it was never a formal part of the Soviet Union. Central Asia was located on what was known as the Silk Road between Europe and the Far East and has long been a crossroads for people, ideas, and trade.

Central Asia has an extremely varied geography, including high mountain passes through vast mountain ranges, such as the Tian Shan, Hindu Kush, and the Pamirs. The region is also home to the vast Kara Kum and Kyzyl Kum deserts, which dominate the interior with extensive spans of sand and desolation. The expansive treeless, grassy steppes surrounding the desert regions are considered an extension of Eastern Europe's steppes. Some geographers think of the Eurasian Steppes as one single, homogenous geographical zone. Under the sand and prairie grasses lay some of the most extensive untapped reserves of gas and oil on the planet. Natural resources are the main attraction of the region, driving the economic forces that determine the development patterns of

individual countries. Multinational corporations have vigorously stepped up their activity in the region.

The political systems are adjusting from the old Soviet Union's socialist policies to new democratic systems that are subject to high levels of authoritarian rule and corruption in business and politics. The five countries of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan were part of the former Soviet Union until its breakup in 1991. Today, with Afghanistan, they are independent countries that make up the region called Central Asia. The term *stan* means "land of," so, for example, Uzbekistan is the land of the Uzbeks. Central Asia is also referred to as *Turkestan* because of the Turkish influence in the region. The people of Turkey did not originate from the Middle East; they originated from northern Asia. They swept through Central Asia and dominated the region on their way to the Middle East. The Turkish language and heritage have had the most significant impact on the people of Central Asia. Turkmenistan's name is another reminder of the Turkish connection; it means "the land of the Turkmen."

Most of the groups of Central Asia were nomadic peoples who rode horses and herded livestock on the region's vast steppes. This way of life continued until the 1920s when the Soviet Union forced many groups to abandon their lifestyle and settle on collective farms and in cities. Most of the people of Central Asia continue to identify culturally with their nomadic past. Central Asians who live in cities often

demonstrate a mix of local and Russian culture in terms of dress and food because of the massive influx of Russian populations. More than six million Russians and Ukrainians were resettled into Central Asia during Soviet rule. Russian is often used as a lingua franca.

One of the primary ways in which people distinguish themselves culturally is through religious practices. Despite the area being part of the Soviet Union, where religious activities were discouraged, Islam was and still is the dominant religion. Most Central Asian Muslims are Sunnis.

Afghanistan

Present-day Afghanistan has been conquered by the likes of Genghis Khan, Alexander the Great, and the Mogul Empire and was a buffer zone for colonial feuds between Russia and British India. The high central mountain range of the Hindu Kush dominates the country and leaves a zone of well-watered fertile plains to the north and a desert region to the south.

Afghanistan is a remote region without access to the sea and acts as a strategic link between the Middle East and the Far East.

The Soviet Invasion and the Taliban

In 1979, the Soviet Union took advantage of ongoing ethnic

warfare in Afghanistan to inject itself into the country. The Soviets pushed in from the north and occupied much of Afghanistan until they completely withdrew in 1989. During the Soviet occupation, the United States supported anti-Communist resistance groups such as the Mujahideen with money, arms, and surface-to-air missiles. The missiles were instrumental in taking out Soviet aircraft and MiG fighters, which caused a critical shift in the balance of power. One of the significant connections between the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Mujahideen was a Saudi national named Osama bin Laden. Support from the CIA through bin Laden to the Mujahideen was instrumental in defeating the Soviets.

The power vacuum left by the retreating Soviets allowed conflicts to reemerge between the many ethnic factions in Afghanistan. Dozens of languages are spoken in Afghanistan; the top two are Pashtu and Afghan Persian-Dari. There are also a dozen major ethnic groups; the top two are Pashtun and Tajik. The groups regularly fight among themselves, but they have also been known to form alliances. Rural areas are usually led by clan leaders who are not part of a national government's official arm. Afghanistan is a place where forming any national unity or identity is not easy. The national government in the capital city of Kabul has little influence in the country's rural regions.

The Soviet invasion brought the internally warring factions together for a short period to focus on the Soviet threat. Chaos and anarchy thrived after the Soviet forces withdrew,

but the Islamic fundamentalist group, known as the Taliban, came forward to fill the power vacuum. One objective of the Taliban was to use Islam as a unifying force to bring the country together. The problem with that concept was that there was much diversity in how the numerous local groups practiced Islam. Many of the factions in Afghanistan opposed the Taliban, one such group being the Northern Alliance, an association of groups located in the northern portion of the country. The civil war between the Taliban and those that opposed them resulted in the deaths of more than fifty thousand people by 1996, when the Taliban emerged to take power in Kabul. The Taliban is a Sunni Muslim group that adheres to strict Islamic laws under the Wahhabi branch of the faith, similar to that of Saudi Arabia. Under Taliban rule, women were removed from positions in hospitals, schools, and work environments and had to wear burkas (also spelled burqas) and be covered from head to toe, including a veil over their faces. Violators were either beaten or shot. The Taliban brought a sense of militant order to Kabul and the regions under their control. Various factions such as the Northern Alliance did not share the Taliban's strict Islamic views and continued to oppose their power positions.

Al-Qaeda and the US Invasion

After the war against the Soviet Union was over, the US role in Afghanistan diminished. The groups that the United States

had supported continued to vie for power in local conflicts. Osama bin Laden remained in Afghanistan and established training camps for his version of an anti-Western resistance group called al-Qaeda. Just as he had opposed the Soviet Union, he now opposed the United States, even though it had supported him against the Soviets. The Saudi government allowed the United States to establish military bases in Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Storm in the Persian Gulf War, and this was one reason for bin Laden's opposition; he believed that non-Muslims should not be on the same ground as the Muslim holy sites of Mecca and Medina.

The 9-11 attack in New York City was traced back to al-Qaeda and bin Laden, who resided in Afghanistan at the time. In a military action dubbed Operation Enduring Freedom, the United States invaded Afghanistan in 2001, removed the Taliban from power, and dismantled the al-Qaeda training camps. Although bin Laden escaped, the terror of the Taliban was temporarily reduced. Women were allowed to return to the workplace, and the rebuilding of the country became a priority. The country was devastated by war and divided by human geography from various ethnic and traditional groups. Afghanistan is one of the most impoverished places on Earth. The armed conflicts in Afghanistan did not end with the US invasion. After regrouping, the Taliban rallied its supporters on the Pakistani side of the border and returned to the fighting front in Afghanistan against the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and US forces.

Fighting between Western forces and the Taliban in Afghanistan continued to provide the exiled bin Laden a platform to promote his al-Qaeda terrorist activities from his hiding place. Efforts to locate and marginalize bin Laden continued through to the US presidency of Barack Obama. In May of 2011, on orders from President Obama, a team of US Navy Seals was sent into the city of Abbottabad, Pakistan, to a private compound where intelligence indicated that bin Laden was hiding. In the confrontation, the US Navy Seal team killed bin Laden. The entire operation was conducted without the awareness of the Pakistani government. This event may have impacted al-Qaeda but has not likely diminished the fighting in Afghanistan.

The country is the world's largest producer of opium, a product extracted from a poppy plant seedpod that can also be refined into heroin. The expanding poppy cultivation, as well as a growing drug trade, may account for one-third of the country's income. More than 80 percent of the heroin consumed in Europe is grown in Afghanistan. The drug trade has only multiplied the problems in this devastated country. Prudent and effective methods for the government to address the drug trade are matters for debate and negotiation. Most of the country is ruled by warlords and clan leaders with few resources other than tradition and custom. Afghanistan's infrastructure has been destroyed through warfare, and its government is dependent on foreign aid; without it, this country cannot recover its integration with the global

economy. Central Asia has enormous oil and natural gas reserves, and the core economic regions of the world will continue their work to extract these resources for economic gain.

Resources and Globalization

In 2010, a US government report indicated that vast amounts of mineral wealth were discovered in Afghanistan by American geologists and Pentagon officials. Enormous deposits of iron, copper, gold, cobalt, and rare industrial minerals such as lithium are present in Afghanistan. Total reserves are unknown or have not been released, but if extracted, it would result in trillions of dollars of economic gain for the country. Lithium is highly sought after and used in manufacturing batteries, computers, and electronic devices. The report indicated that Afghanistan could become the world's premier mining country.

The discovery of vast resources helps place the war in Afghanistan in perspective concerning global competition over the control of resources. It has been reported that China has already offered millions of dollars in incentive money to Afghan government officials to allow its country to mine copper. Bribery and corruption in the Afghan government is a serious impediment to a stable political environment, but criminal activities are projected to persist and swell with the potential for additional mining wealth. Afghanistan does not

have a long-standing tradition of mining. Agriculture has been the main focus of economic activity for rural communities. A newfound potential for mineral wealth will change the future of Afghanistan. It will be interesting to watch how Afghanistan adapts to and benefits from discovering previously unknown resources.

Kazakhstan

The traditional people of Kazakhstan, who share a Mongol and Turkic heritage, joined the Central Asia region sometime after 1200 CE. The expansion of the Russian Empire under the tsars integrated Kazakhstan and its neighbors, which eased their transition when the tsarist system of the Russian government gave way to the Soviet Union. The influx of Russian people and culture had a significant influence on Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, thereby creating the world's largest landlocked nation. It is the ninth-largest state on the planet in terms of square miles and is more extensive in physical area than all Western Europe. This vast land is host to a wide variety of physical landscapes, including the high, snow-capped peaks of the ranges on the Chinese border. The western portions are lowlands bordering the Caspian Sea. The seemingly endless grasslands of the interior are one of the largest steppe regions

in the world. The steppe region has a semiarid type B climate. A large portion of southern Kazakhstan is desert, including the northern regions of the Kyzyl Kum Desert. Colder type D climates are found in the northern regions of the country.

The steppe produces grain in large quantities and other agricultural products, while the productive mining of minerals adds to the national wealth. Kazakhstan ranks high in the mining of many metals and uranium. Even diamonds are found here. Oil and natural gas extraction accounts for the country's largest sector and generates the most substantial export income. The Tengiz basin around the northeast shores of the Caspian Sea is home to extensive petroleum reserves. Oil pipelines are expanding to transport the oil to port locations and other countries, including China. Kazakhstan's economy has been more substantial than the economies of all the other Central Asian states combined.

Kazakhstan also has a forward capital. During the Soviet era, the capital was located in the southeast of Almaty. However, after gaining independence in 1991, the capital was moved north to Astana to ensure that the Russian-dominated northeast would be monitored against devolutionary forces that desiring to secede and become part of the Russian Republic.

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan physically borders all the Central Asian countries. It is the most populous Central Asian country, with a population that exceeds twenty-seven million. Uzbekistan's eastern boundary extends deep into Kyrgyzstan territory. During the Soviet era, the boundary lines were created to provide the central government with more control over its republics by politicizing enclaves. Geographers call Uzbekistan a doubly landlocked nation because all the countries that surround it are also landlocked. The primary source of freshwater comes from the Eastern Highland regions. The main rivers have been heavily diverted for irrigation and are often depleted before reaching their destination at the Aral Sea.

Cotton is the main agricultural crop. Uzbekistan is one of the top producers of cotton globally and is a significant exporter of world markets. The central and western regions have mainly arid desert climates and rely heavily on the freshwater flowing from the mountains. Agriculture employs a full one-fourth of the population and accounts for one-fourth of the gross domestic product (GDP). The extraction of gold, minerals, and fossil fuels are also prime economic activities. The country has been transitioning from the old Soviet Union's command economy controlled by the central government to a market economy competing in a global marketplace.

Uzbekistan is a country of young people: about one-third of the population is under the age of fifteen. Education was heavily emphasized during the Soviet era; as a result, about 99 percent of the population is literate—though about one-third of the people still live in poverty. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Islam emerged in this country after Uzbekistan won its independence in 1991. In a culture of openness, Islam has risen in prominence to the point that approximately 88 percent of Uzbeks profess Islamic beliefs. The most commonly spoken language is Persian/Farsi.

Samarkand and the country's capital city, Tashkent, are located in the eastern core region, home to most of the population. Tashkent has an unofficial population of more than three million people. The city, which sits on the confluence of a local river and its tributaries, started as a caravanserai or oasis for trade along the Silk Road. Samarkand is Uzbekistan's second-largest city and is most noted as the central city of the Silk Road as well as an essential historical city for Islamic scholars. In 2001, UNESCO declared this 2,750-year-old city a World Heritage Site. It is one of the oldest continually inhabited cities globally and has been one of the more important cities in Central Asia. Islamic styles from Iran heavily influence the historical architecture. The region around Bukhara, Uzbekistan's fifth-largest city, has been occupied for at least five thousand years. Bukhara was another important city on the Silk Road and is known for its Asian carpet and textile industry. This region has been an

important cultural, economic, and scholarly center for most of its known existence.

Turkmenistan

To the south of the Amu Darya River is Turkmenistan's desert country, which extends from the Caspian Sea to Afghanistan in the east. Turkmenistan is slightly larger in physical area than the US state of California. Roughly 80 percent of the country is covered by the Kara Kum Desert, which is among the world's driest. The southern mountains along the Iranian and Afghan border reach as high as 10,290 feet in elevation. The seven-hundred-mile-long Kara Kum Canal through Turkmenistan has diverted water from the Amu Darya River to grow cotton and other agricultural products.

The transition from a Soviet republic to an independent state in 1991 brought many changes. The former leader of the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic, Saparmurat Niyazov, who went by the name Turkmenbashi (leader of the Turkmen people), dominated the presidency for fifteen years. Through his authoritarian rule, he promoted a traditional culture – with Islam as the predominant religion – and was notorious for developing a cult of personality. For example, he changed all the names of the days of the week and the months of the year to his name, the names of his family members, and

the names of Turkmen heroes or famous people.

Turkmenbashi's image was printed on the currency, and large posters of him could be seen throughout the country. His book on essential concepts, the *Ruhnama* (The Book of the Soul), was to be read by all school children and the public. After he died in 2006, many of his actions were reversed. The country continues to transition to a stable democratic state, though many of the same dynamics of corruption and authoritarian rule remain.

Turkmenistan is blessed with the fourth-largest natural gas reserves in the world; the top three are Russia, Iran, and the United States. The income from natural gas exports has become the country's most important means of gaining wealth. Because Turkmenistan is landlocked, its government has been forced to partner with Russia to use Russia's pipelines to export natural gas. Not wishing to rely on Russia's monopoly on the pipelines, Turkmenistan developed an additional pipeline to China to help boost income and profits. Many international corporations seek to do business in Turkmenistan and Central Asia to corner a piece of the vast natural resources. Corporate colonialism is extraordinarily active and has contributed to a high level of corruption in the government and the business sector. It is unclear how much of the country's wealth filters down to most of the population. Over the past decade, unemployment rates have exceeded 50 percent, and more than half the population lives below the poverty line.

The administrative center and largest city of Turkmenistan is its capital, Ashgabat, which has a population of about one million. Ashgabat lies between the Kara Kum Desert and the mountains near the former Silk Road. In the historic region of Central Asia, it is comparatively a very young town, having grown out of a small village founded in 1818. Ashgabat is primarily a government and administrative center, although it has thriving cotton, textile, and metalworking industries. Ashgabat is also a popular stop along the Trans-Caspian Railway.

Kyrgyzstan

Local groups in the mountains of Central Asia make up the population of Kyrgyzstan. The forty rays of sun on the country's flag symbolize the legendary forty tribes of Manas representing the nation. The rugged landscape of this mountainous land includes the high ranges of the Tian Shan Mountains, which can reach elevations as high as 24,400 feet and cover about 80 percent of the country. Snowfall from the mountains provides freshwater for agriculture as well as hydroelectric energy. Food crops can be grown in the valleys and the few lowland areas. Half the population works in agriculture, and self-sufficiency in food production is a significant objective for survival. The mountains hold deposits of metals and minerals that have a strong potential

for adding to the national wealth. Oil and natural gas reserves are also available for exploitation. The government is seeking foreign aid and investments to help develop these resources.

In 2009, Kyrgyzstan had a population of about 5.4 million in a land area about the size of the US state of South Dakota. About 30 percent of the population is under the age of fifteen, and about 36 percent of the population is urban. The western boundary with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan is winding and creates various small enclaves and exclaves of people from one country surrounded by people of another country and separated from their home nations.

Kyrgyzstan's transition from a Soviet republic to independence was not smooth. The loss of the state social safety net pushed the economy further to the informal sector, where trading and small transactions for personal survival are common. Shortages of consumer goods occur in rural areas and small towns. Kyrgyzstan is an isolated country working to integrate itself into the global economy through technology and modernization. In 2010, clashes between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz brought about riots in the streets of major cities, resulting in more than two hundred casualties and three hundred thousand displaced citizens. After the situation cooled down, the government worked to stabilize itself with new leadership.

A form of improvisational oral poetry that allegedly dates back to more than one thousand years ago is an aspect of traditional culture that has been preserved. While common

throughout the region, it is mainly found in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Practitioners will often engage in “lyrical battles” of folklore. These poets, often accompanied by two- or three-stringed instruments will recite the *Manas*, an epic poem of Kyrgyzstan that details Kyrgyzstan hero *Manas*’s life. This epic tale is a renowned part of the culture and festivals of Kyrgyzstan.

Tajikistan

The eastern region of Central Asia has some of the highest mountain ranges globally; about 90 percent of Tajikistan is mountainous, and more than half the country is 10,000 feet in elevation or higher. Ranges of the Himalayas extend from the south to the western border with China. The Pamir is a mountain range where the Tian Shan, Karakorum, and Hindu Kush mountain ranges meet in Tajikistan, an area referred to as the Pamir Knot or the roof of the world. Elevations in the Pamirs often exceed 24,500 feet. The Pamirs is the source of the Amu Darya River and is home to the longest glacier outside the polar regions (forty-eight miles long in 2009). There is an excellent potential for hydroelectric power generation, and Tajikistan is developing the world’s highest dam.

Tajikistan has the smallest physical area of any country in Central Asia but has a population of about 7.3 million. Only

about one-fourth of the population is urban, and one-third of the population is younger than fifteen years old. There is less ethnic or religious diversity; 80 percent of the people are ethnically Tajik and are Sunni Muslims. Though it has natural resources similar in quantity to those in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan's economy is not advanced enough to fully take advantage of its economic potential. Half the labor base works abroad and sends remittances back to their families for economic support. Unemployment is high, and job opportunities have not been able to keep up with demand.

Dushanbe, the capital and largest city of Tajikistan, is situated on the confluence of two local rivers and is famous for its Monday markets (Dushanbe means “Monday” in Tajik). Like Ashgabat in Turkmenistan, Dushanbe was initially a small village; it became an administrative center for the region when the Soviet army conquered the area in 1929. Like many other cities and regions in Central Asia, the Soviets transformed the political and economic landscape and made Dushanbe a center for cotton and silk production. The Soviets also transformed the city's cultural and ethnic makeup by relocating tens of thousands of people from Russia and other regions of Central Asia to Dushanbe.

The transition from the Soviet Republic to an independent country in 1991 was difficult for Tajikistan. From 1992 to 1997, a bitter civil war between regional factions killed more than fifty thousand people. Political instability and corruption have hampered the growth of a market economy,

and political power remains in the hands of the economic elite. Debt restructuring with Russia and an infusion of development loans from China have aided the ailing economy. Aid from the US helped fund a thirty-six-million-dollar bridge linking Tajikistan and Afghanistan, which opened in August 2007. US aid has also contributed to infrastructure development designed to help US military operations in Afghanistan and the region. Countries like Russia, China, and the United States are all looking to gain an advantage with their ties to Tajikistan to exploit the region's natural resources.

6.9 SUMMARY

North Africa, Southwest Asia, and Central Asia (Turkestan) are included in the realm of North Africa and Southwest Asia, which is dominated by the religion of Islam, arid type B climates, and the export of oil and natural gas. Large, expansive deserts make up most of the physical areas of all three regions of the realm. Water is of particular importance, as most of the population has traditionally made a living from agriculture. Division, warfare, and conflict have been constant elements. The Arab Spring of 2011 included a wave of mass citizen demonstrations in many Arab countries where the people demanded political and economic reform.

The three main monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam emerged from the Middle East and can be traced back to a common patriarch, Abraham. Most of the people in the realm are Muslims. The Five Pillars of Islam create a guide for Muslims to live by. Mecca, the holiest city for Muslims worldwide, is where the prophet Muhammad started the religion. The two main divisions of Islam are Sunni (84 percent) and Shia (15 percent). Other smaller divisions exist, such as Sufi.

North Africa includes the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea and Sudan on the Red Sea. Most of the

people in North Africa are Muslims. The high-population areas are along the coast or along the Nile River. The Maghreb is included in the region with the Atlas Mountains in the west. The Atlas Mountains trap moisture, which provides precipitation for agriculture in the mountain valleys. The countries of North Africa have all witnessed political uprisings in which the people have demanded democratic reforms and increased civil rights. Egypt is the most populous Arab country and the cornerstone of the Arab world.

The African Transition Zone is where the dry, arid conditions of the Sahara Desert meet the tropical conditions of Equatorial Africa. Islam is dominant in the north, and Christianity and tribal religions are dominant in the south. Sudan is one place where the two sides have clashed in warfare and division. Tribal Christian southern Sudan separated from the Arab Muslim north to create the independent country of South Sudan. Ethnic cleansing has been witnessed in the western part of Sudan in the region of Darfur.

Palestine was divided in half in 1945 into an Arab state and a Jewish state. The Jewish state became the nation of Israel in 1948. Since that time, there has been a constant struggle between the mainly Arab Palestinians and the Jewish State of Israel. The West Bank and the Gaza Strip are Palestinian regions that have worked to be recognized with equal sovereignty. The solution to this division is debated; both sides have claims that are incompatible with each other. The

neighboring Arab states of Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon have their own unique political situations.

The Arabian Peninsula includes a number of states ruled by a single king, sultan, emir, or sheik, except Yemen, which has a democratically elected president. Saudi Arabia is the home of the two main cities of Islam, Mecca and Medina. Saudi Arabia is the largest country on the peninsula and has about 25 percent of all the known oil reserves in the world. Oil and natural gas are the main export products and the main source of income for the region. Yemen is mainly an agricultural country with high population growth and a rural majority.

Most people in Turkey are of Turkish ethnicity, and most people in Iran are of Persian ethnicity. The country of Turkey is what remains from the once expansive Ottoman Empire. Iran is a country of mountains and deserts that was once the center of the Persian Empire. Turkey has a portion of its country in Europe, and its largest part includes the expansive Anatolian Plateau in Asia. Turkey is a democratic republic with elected public officials. Iran is a religious state in which the Islamic leadership controls who can be included in the government. Both countries have large populations of about seventy million each.

Iraq was at the center of the Fertile Crescent of Mesopotamia, which spawned early human civilizations. Iraq was invaded by the United States in 2003 and has been working to establish a democratic government. The country is

divided between a Shia majority and a Sunni minority. It is an Arab country with a large minority group of Kurds in the north. Iraq has enormous oil reserves that have not yet been developed for exploitation, which has attracted the attention of the world's energy-dependent core regions.

Central Asia (Turkestan) is a landlocked region with mainly type B climates with cooler temperatures in the higher elevations of the eastern mountains. The prominently Muslim region has been transitioning from a Soviet-controlled domain to independent states. Some countries are making the transition with less difficulty than others. The Aral Sea has been one of the major environmental disasters in modern history. Globalization activities have targeted the region for its immense amount of natural resources—mainly oil, natural gas, and minerals.

Afghanistan has been conquered by many empires and was a buffer state between British and Russian colonial efforts. The country has a dry, rugged terrain and a devastated economy. The people are poor with little infrastructure. The many tribal groups have made it difficult for a centralized government to be effective. The United States invaded Afghanistan in 2001 to remove al-Qaeda training camps run by Osama bin Laden. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces have taken over the mission in Afghanistan to defeat the Taliban extremists and support stability for the country. Afghanistan has enormous amounts of mineral

resources that are in high demand by the world's core industrial regions.

6.10 THE SILK ROADS: THEN AND NOW

Explore the Silk Roads transfer of goods, ideas, and diseases yesterday and today.

Learning Outcomes

- Compare the Silk Road to the Iron Silk Road.
- Analyze geographic factors contributing to the location of the Silk Roads.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
<https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/worldgeography/?p=370#h5p-5>

PART VII

SOUTH AMERICA

7.1 IDENTIFYING THE BOUNDARIES

Identifying the Region



Europeans called the Western Hemisphere the New World. South America is the realm consisting of the southern portion of the New World. This realm includes the entire continent of South America, which is smaller in physical area than North America. As a continent, South America is more extensive in physical area than Europe, Antarctica, or Australia but is smaller in physical area than Africa or Asia. The South American continent is located farther east than North America and is smaller in physical area. Almost the entire landmass of South America lies to the east of the same

meridian that runs through Miami, Florida. The Atlantic Ocean borders the continent to the east, and the Pacific Ocean borders the continent on the west. The narrow Isthmus of Panama creates a natural break between the South American continent and its neighbors to the north. The Caribbean Sea creates the northern boundary.

The continent covers an extensive range of latitude. The equator cuts through the northern part of the continent directly through the mouth of the **Amazon River**. The country of Ecuador is located on the equator, hence its name. The equatorial region is dominated by the tropical climates of the immense **Amazon Basin**. The Tropic of Capricorn runs directly through the latitude of São Paulo, Brazil, and Chile's **Atacama Desert**, which reveals that most of the continent is in the tropics zone to the north. South of the Tropic of Capricorn in the **Southern Cone** of South America, home to the **Pampas** and **Patagonia**. **Tierra del Fuego** in the southern tip of the realm with territory in both Argentina and Chile. On the south side of the Tierra del Fuego archipelago is **Cape Horn**, which is considered the southernmost land point of the continent. The Diego Ramírez Islands south of Cape Horn mark the southern boundary of South America.

Several noted island groups are usually affiliated with the physical region of South America. The **Galapagos Islands** are territorially a part of the country of Ecuador. The **Falkland Islands**, often referred to as the **Malvinas**, are located off the southern coast of Argentina. They are physically associated

with South America but are administered and controlled by Great Britain as an overseas territory. Argentina has claimed the Falkland Islands and has battled Great Britain for them. Chile controls the noted **Easter Island** and the **Robinson Crusoe Island** in the Pacific Ocean. Various islands in the Lesser Antilles of the Caribbean, such as the Dutch islands of Aruba, Curacao, and Bonaire, are sometimes associated with South America because of their proximity to the continent. They are included in the Caribbean and are more often associated with Middle America.

7.2 PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE REGION

Physical Landscape

The far-reaching Andes Mountains and the massive Amazon River system dominate South America's physical geography. The five-thousand-mile-long Andes Mountain chain extends along the entire western region of the continent from Venezuela to southern Chile. The Andes is the longest mountain chain on Earth and the highest in the Americas. The Andes Mountain range has more than thirty peaks that reach at least twenty thousand feet in elevation, many of which are active volcanoes. The Andes has provided isolation to the Inca Empire, mineral wealth to those with the means for extraction, and a barrier to travelers crossing the continent. The Andes' minerals include gold, silver, tin, and other precious metals. Mining became a significant industry in the colonial era and continues to the present.



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can view them online here:

*[https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/
worldgeography/?p=399#oembed-1](https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/worldgeography/?p=399#oembed-1)*

At the core of the continent is the mighty Amazon River, which is more than two thousand miles long and has an enormous drainage basin in the world's largest tropical rain forest. Amazon's many tributaries are more extensive than many other world rivers. Flowing parallel to the equator, the Amazon is in contention with the Nile as the longest river in the world. In 2007, a dispute arose over the actual length of the Amazon River. Brazilian scientists using satellite imagery and teams on the ground using a global positioning system (GPS) calculated a new length for the Amazon. Using similar methods, the Nile River also had a new length calculated. Both were determined to be longer than initially measured. Currently, the actual length of each river is openly disputed. The most accurate statement is that the Amazon River has the highest discharge of any river in the world, and it is potentially also the longest river in the world.



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The Amazon River and tributaries carry about a fifth of all river water in the world, and drain the entire interior region of the continent, covering 40 percent of South America. During the rainy season, the Amazon River can be more than one hundred miles wide. No bridges span the Amazon River. Its source is a glacial stream located high in the Peruvian Andes, about 150 miles from the Pacific Ocean.



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[https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/
worldgeography/?p=399#oembed-2](https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/worldgeography/?p=399#oembed-2)

The Amazon's extended tributaries, such as the **Rio Negro**, the **Madeira**, and the **Xingu**, move massive amounts of water through the Amazon Basin and are significant rivers. The Amazon has more than 1,100 tributaries; a dozen are more than one thousand miles long. Hydroelectric dams are located on the tributaries to produce electricity for the region's fast-growing development. South America has additional large rivers that drain the continent, including the Orinoco, which flows through Venezuela, the **Sao Francisco**, which flows through southeast Brazil, and **Paraguay** and the **Paraná Rivers**, which flow south from Brazil into the **Rio de la Plata** between Argentina and Uruguay.



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[https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/
worldgeography/?p=399#oembed-3](https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/worldgeography/?p=399#oembed-3)

Lake Titicaca rests in the middle of the **Altiplano Region** of the Central Andes on the border between Peru and Bolivia. The **Altiplano** region, meaning “valley” in Spanish, is a broad basin between two main Andean mountain ranges. There is a substantial number of altiplanos in South America that provide for agricultural production and human habitation. The Altiplano region has been home to ancient civilizations that date back to early human settlements. Lake Titicaca is a large freshwater lake about 120 miles long and 50 miles wide. The surface is at an elevation of about twelve thousand feet above sea level, and the lake is more than nine hundred feet deep in some areas. Usually, at such high elevations, the temperature would dip below freezing and restrict agriculture. However, the large lake acts as a solar energy collector by absorbing energy from the sun during the day and giving off that energy in the form of heat during the night. The energy redistribution allows for a moderate temperature around the lake that is conducive to growing food crops. With abundant freshwater and the ability to grow food and catch fish, the Altiplano Region has supported human habitation for thousands of years. On the Bolivian side of the lake is the ancient stone site of Tiahuanaco, which has had artifacts dated to 1500 BCE or earlier. People continue to live around and on Lake Titicaca and maintain a subsistence lifestyle.



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Across the Andes Mountains from the Altiplano Region is the **Atacama Desert**. The Atacama is one of the driest places on Earth: in some parts, no rain has fallen in recorded history. In normal circumstances, the Atacama would be a desolate region without human activity, but that is not the case. Some of the world's largest copper reserves are found here. Nitrates, which are used in fertilizers, are also found in large quantities. Mining the Atacama has brought enormous wealth to people fortunate enough to be on the receiving end of the profits. The rain shadow effect is responsible for the extraordinary dryness of the Atacama. The Andes are quite high at this latitude, and the winds blow in rain clouds from the east. When the clouds reach the mountains, they ascend in elevation, releasing their precipitation without ever reaching the Andes' western side.



“Atacam Valley” is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license](#).

South America has vast agricultural plateaus east of the Andes, such as the **Mato Grosso Plateau**, which includes a portion of the great cerrado agricultural region of central Brazil. The Cerrado is a vast plain that has been developed for agriculture and produces enormous harvests of soybeans and grain crops. Bordering the Cerrado to the southeast are the **Brazilian Highlands**, an extensive coffee-growing region. The **Pampas** in eastern Argentina, Uruguay, and southernmost Brazil is another agricultural region with good soil and adequate rainfall. Farming, cattle ranching, and even vineyards can be found here, making the Pampas the breadbasket of the Southern Cone. To the south of the Pampas is the lengthy expanse of **Patagonia**, which covers the southern portion of Argentina east of the Andes. Patagonia is

a prairie grassland region that does not receive very much rainfall because of the rain shadow effect of the Andes to the west. The main activities in Patagonia are the raising of cattle and other livestock. The region is starting to attract attention to the extraction of natural resources such as oil, natural gas, and valuable minerals.

To the northern part of the continent in Venezuela and Colombia, sandwiched between the Andes Mountains and the **Guiana Highlands**, is a grassland region with scrub forests called the Llanos. The human population is small because of the remoteness of the region along the Orinoco River basin. The Guiana Highlands of southeast Venezuela and the Guianas are an isolated set of mountainous plateaus mixed with rugged landscapes and tropical climates. Angel Falls, the highest waterfall in the world, with a free fall of more than 2,647 feet and a total drop of about 3,212 feet (more than half a mile), is located here. To the northwest of the Llanos and the Guiana Highlands in Venezuela is **Lake Maracaibo**, a large inland lake open to the Caribbean Sea. A coastal lake, Maracaibo rests atop vast oil reserves that provide economic wealth for Venezuela.

El Nino and La Nina

Short-term climate change is common, with the largest and most important of these is the oscillation between **El Niño**

and **La Niña** conditions. This cycle is called the **El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO)**. The ENSO drives changes in climate that are felt around the world about every two to seven years.

In a typical year, the trade winds blow across the Pacific Ocean near the equator from east to west (toward Asia). A low-pressure cell rises above the western equatorial Pacific. Warm water in the western Pacific Ocean and raises sea levels by a one-half meter. Along the western coast of South America, the Peru Current carries cold water northward and then westward along the equator with the trade winds. Upwelling brings cold, nutrient-rich waters from the deep sea.

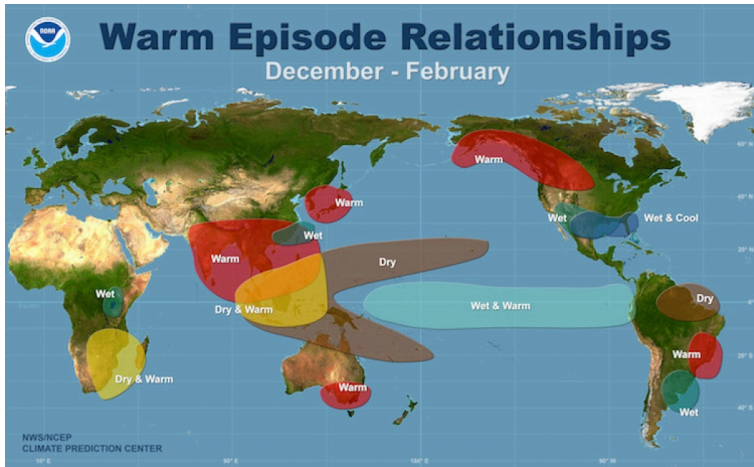


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In an El Niño year, when the water temperature reaches around 28 degrees C (82 degrees F), the trade winds weaken or reverse direction and blow east (toward South America). Warm water is dragged back across the Pacific Ocean and piles up off the west coast of South America. With warm, low-density water at the surface, upwelling stops. Without

upwelling, nutrients are scarce, and plankton populations decline. Since plankton forms the base of the food web, fish cannot find food, and fish numbers decrease. All the animals that eat fish, including birds and humans, are affected by the decline in fish.



“Effects of El Niño” by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is licensed as Public Domain.

By altering atmospheric and oceanic circulation, El Niño events change global weather patterns. Some regions receive more than average rainfall, including the west coast of North and South America, the southern United States, and Western Europe. Drought occurs in other parts of South America, the western Pacific, southern and northern Africa, and southern Europe.



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An El Niño cycle lasts only a few years, with normal circulation patterns resuming. Sometimes circulation patterns bounce back quickly and remarkably, called La Niña. During a La Niña year, as in a typical year, trade winds move from east to west, and warm water piles up in the western Pacific Ocean. Ocean temperatures along coastal South America are colder than average (instead of warmer, as in El Niño). Coldwater reaches farther into the western Pacific than usual.



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Other significant oscillations are smaller and have a local, rather than global, effect. The North Atlantic Oscillation

mostly alters the climate in Europe. The Mediterranean also goes through cycles, varying between being dry at some times, and warm and wet at others. For more information on El Nino and La Nina, check out the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**.

Amazon Rainforest and Destruction

The Amazon rainforest is considered one of the largest, roughly 2 million square miles, and biologically diverse rainforests worldwide. The vast majority of the rainforest exists within Brazil (60 percent), followed by Peru (13 percent), Columbia (10 percent), and a few other South American countries.



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Wet tropical rainforests like the Amazon have some of the richest biomes and biodiversity on the planet. Ecologists

believe that 1 in 10 plant and animal species live in the Amazon rainforest, making it the largest habitat of species. Scientists have scientifically classified the following regarding the biodiversity of the Amazon:

- 2.5 million insect species
- 40,000 plant species
- 2,200 fish species
- 1,300 bird species
- 430 mammal species
- 430 amphibian species
- 380 reptile species



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Deforestation, the conversion of forested habitats to non-forested habitats, has reduced the habitat critical to native species' survival. An estimated 50 percent of the earth's species live in tropical rain forests, which only cover about 5 percent of the earth's surface. Tropical rain forests in the Amazon Basin are being cut down at an unsustainable rate, creating severe environmental problems. Loggers cut down the towering trees, and the rest are usually burned to allow the ash to provide nutrients for other plants. Cattle ranchers most often use the cleared areas until the soil is no longer viable. Then more forest is cut down, and the process continues. Speculation that land prices will increase as the region becomes more developed encourages this process.



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During the 1960s, there was limited access to the interior of the Amazon basin. Any farming that was done within the rainforest was slash-and-burn agriculture. Even though the rainforest has plenty of moisture, the soil is deficient in nutrients because the excess precipitation washes away the nutrients. **Slash-and-burn agriculture** is a process where local farmers will cut down (slash) and burn the trees to replenish nutrients back into the infertile soil. This allows farmers to grow crops for a few years until the precipitation leaches out all of the nutrients. Since many farmers in the Amazon live in poverty, they do not have access to fertilizer. So after the soil becomes nutrient deficient again, local farmers most move on to new areas within the rainforest and start the slash-and-burn process again.



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The forest has many layers of habitat. Soils in the tropics are deficient in nutrients, which have been leached out by the abundant rainfall. The nutrients are on the surface layer of the ground built up from falling leaves, branches, and debris

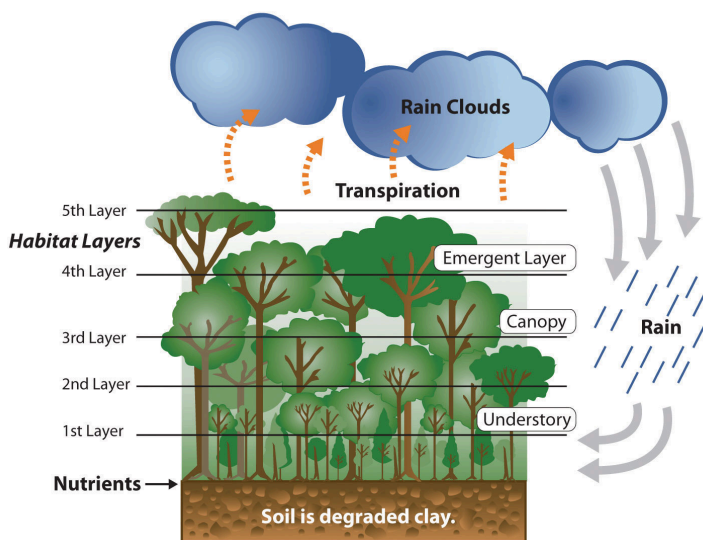
decomposing on the forest floor. The removal of the forests removes these nutrients and results in severe soil erosion. Tropical forests usually expand along the edges where falling debris from the trees collects and provides nutrients for young plants.



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There is much discussion among environmentalists, scientists, and other concerned people about deforestation in the Amazon region, usually focusing on the devastation that results from the loss of forested areas. Forest studies have indicated that tropical rain forests are quite resilient and can recover with proper forest management. However, clear-cutting large, extensive areas for timber leaves an area devastated for an extended period. Clear-cutting could be replaced by strip cutting, which would harvest trees in narrower strips, leaving rows of trees standing. Strip cutting allows for more edges to be available for young plants to get their start to replenish the forest.



“Dynamics of a Tropical Forest” by the University of Minnesota is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license.

The image above illustrates that the nutrients of the tropical rain forest ecosystem rest on the forest floor because tropical soils are degraded. The forest canopy has many habitat layers providing homes to a diversity of organisms. Dense tropical rain forests also contribute to transpiration, which cycles precipitation from the ground back into the atmosphere where it can collect and return in the form of rain.



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Additional forest habitat is lost when rivers are dammed up for hydroelectric power, and thousands of acres of tropical rain forests are flooded. Decomposing plant material in the reservoirs behind the dams increases the water's acidity, causing erosion to the hydroelectric turbines. The turbines have a short life span, so the dams are a short-term energy solution that creates long-term problems. The large flooded areas reduce the habitat for tropical organisms and restrict the use of the land for other purposes. Flooding can extend into traditional hunting grounds for indigenous groups with little political power to restrict this type of development.

Today, roughly 70-80 percent of the deforestation within the Amazon rainforest is for creating pastures for livestock, specifically cows. The remaining 20-30 percent of the areas being deforested has been for growing soybeans or sugarcane and drilling for oil.





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Amazon Rainforest Fires of 2019



“Fires and Deforestation on the Amazon Frontier, Rondonia, Brazil” by NASA Earth Observatory is licensed as Public Domain.

In 2019, the world was reminded of deforestation in the Amazon rainforest. It is believed that there were over 72,843 wildfires in Brazil alone, which was an 88 percent increase from 2018. It is not fully known how or why there were so many fires in 2019, but the likely culprits were either arsonists, industry, and climate change.



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The Amazon rainforest is considered a “carbon sink,” meaning that it absorbs vast quantities of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. The rainforest also interacts with the vast moisture in the atmosphere and can create clouds that aid in creating precipitation back to the forest, creating a micro-water cycle. However, scientific research has indicated that deforestation may cause the rainforest to dry out, which could alter the world’s climates. As the Amazon rainforest is burned down, it could hinder the local clouds created by the forest, thus drying out of the region.



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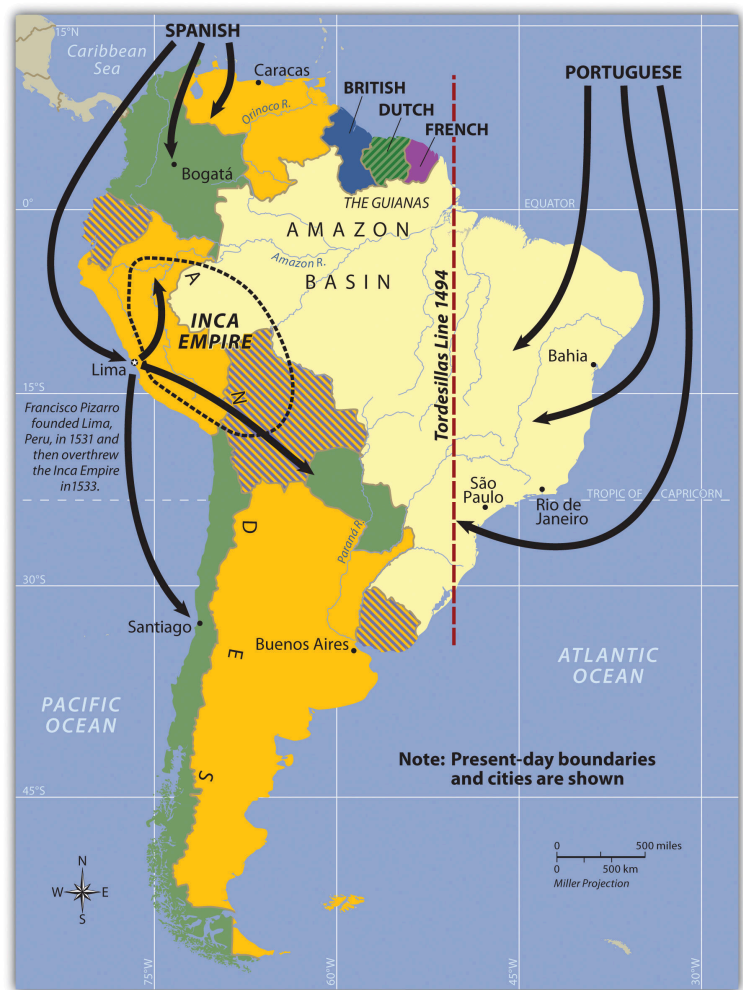
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7.3 HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE REGION

History of South America

European Colonialism

South America's colonial legacy shaped its early cultural landscape. The indigenous people, with their empires and local groups, were no match for the Iberian invaders who brought European colonialism to the continent. South America was colonized exclusively by two central Iberian powers: Spain colonized the western part of South America, and Portugal colonized the east coast of what is present-day Brazil. The only region that was not colonized by those two powers was the small region of the Guianas, which was colonized by Great Britain, the Netherlands, and France.



“Colonial Activity in South America” by the University of Minnesota is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license.

Everything changed with the invasion of the Iberian colonizers. The underlying tenets of culture, religion, and

economics of the local indigenous people were disrupted and forced to change. It is no mystery why the two dominant languages of South America are Spanish and Portuguese, and why Roman Catholicism is the realm's dominant religion. Colonialism also was responsible for transporting food crops such as the potato, which originated in the Peruvian Andes, to the European dinner table. Today, coffee is the main export of Colombia, Brazil, and other countries in the tropics. Coffee was not native to South America but originated in Ethiopia and was transferred by colonial activity. The same is true of sugarcane, bananas, and citrus fruits; oranges were not native to South America, but today, Brazil is the number one exporter of orange juice. Colonialism was driven by the desire for profit from the quick sale of products such as gold or silver, and there was a ready market for goods not found in Europe, such as tobacco, corn, exotic animals, and tropical woods.

Plantation agriculture introduced by the Europeans led to high demand for manual laborers. When the local populations could not meet the labor demand, millions of African workers were brought through the slave trade. These African slaves introduced their unique customs and traditions, altering the Western Hemisphere's culture and demographics. The current indigenous Amerindian population, a fraction of what it was before the Europeans arrived, makes up only a small percentage of South America's total population. European colonizers generally took the best

land and controlled the economic trade of the region. The acculturation in South America is directly related to the European colonial experience.

The Inca Empire and Francisco Pizarro

Not long after Hernán Cortés conquered the Aztec Empire of Mexico in 1521, a young Spanish conquistador named Francisco Pizarro, stationed in what is now **Panama**, heard rumors of silver and gold found among the South American people. He led several sailing excursions along the west coast of South America. In 1531 CE, he founded the port city of Lima, Peru. Since 1200 CE, the Inca had ruled a vast empire extending from central Peru, including the high-elevation Altiplano Region around Lake Titicaca. The Inca Empire dominated an area from Ecuador to northern Chile. The Inca were not the most populous people but were a ruling class who controlled other subjugated groups. With fewer than two hundred men and two dozen horses, Pizarro met up with the Inca armies and managed to defeat them in a series of military maneuvers. The Spanish captured the Inca leader in 1533. Two years later, in 1535, the Inca Empire collapsed.



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The Inca Empire was significant thanks to the high volume of gold and silver found in that region of the Andes. The story is told that Pizarro placed the captured Inca leader in a small room and told him that if the room were filled with gold to the top of the Inca leader's head, Pizarro would let the Inca leader go free. Gold was summoned from the people and the countryside, and the room was filled. The conquistadors forced the Inca leader to convert to Catholicism and be baptized and then killed him. The gold was melted down and transported back to Spain. The mineral wealth of the Andes made the conquistadors rich. Lima was once one of the wealthiest cities in the world. Europeans continued to dominate and exploit the mining of minerals in Peru and Bolivia throughout the colonial era. Since colonial times, European elites or a Mestizo ruling class has dominated or controlled the local Amerindian groups in the Andes.



“The Jesuit Church of La Compania de Jesus on the Plaza de Armas in Cuzco, Peru” [by the University of Minnesota is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license.](#)

The original church (above) was constructed in 1571 on the site of the ancient Incan palace. The earthquake of 1650 caused severe damage to the building, so it had to be reconstructed in about 1688. Many Catholic cathedrals in Latin America were built with stones from ancient sites. This cathedral is claimed to be the Western Hemisphere’s most ideal example of colonial baroque architecture.

Many Amerindian groups inhabited this region before the Inca Empire, such as the people who built and lived in the ancient city of Tiahuanaco, which could have bordered Lake

Titicaca during an earlier climate period, when the lake was much more extensive. Humans have lived in South America for thousands of years. There is speculation that travel between South America and the Mediterranean region occurred earlier than current historical records indicate. Many of the ruins in the western region of South America have not been thoroughly excavated or examined by archaeologists, and the size and scope of many of the stone structures stand as testimony to the advancements in engineering and technology employed in an era that, according to historical records, had only primitive tools.

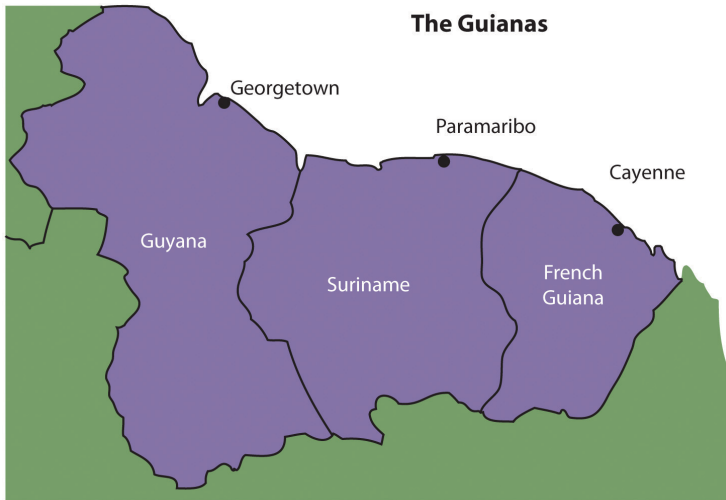
The Iberian Division of the Continent

The Spanish conquistadors were not the only European invaders to colonize South America. Colonial influence, which forced a change in languages, religion, and economics, also came from the small European kingdom of Portugal. Portuguese ships sailed along the eastern coast of South America and laid claim to the king's region. The Portuguese did not find large gold or silver reserves, but they coveted the land to expand their empire. Soon the Spanish and the Portuguese were fighting over the same parts of South America. In 1494, the issue was brought before the Roman Catholic Church. The Tordesillas Line was drawn on a map to divide South America into the Spanish west and the Portuguese east. The region that is now Brazil became the

most significant Portuguese colonial possession in South America, a center for plantation agriculture similar to that in the Caribbean. For this reason, a large African population lives in Brazil, and most of the people in Brazil speak Portuguese and are Roman Catholics.

Independence did not come for the Spanish colonies until 1816 and 1818, when Chile and Argentina broke away in an independence movement in the south. Simón Bolívar led liberation movements in the north. By 1824, the Spanish were defeated in South America. Brazil did not gain independence from Portugal until 1822, when the prince of Portugal declared an independent Brazil and made himself Brazil's first emperor. It was not until 1889 that a true republic was declared, and the empire was abolished.

Colonialism and the Guianas



"The Guianas of South America" by the University of Minnesota is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license.

The Guianas in the northeast were the only European colonies in South America that were not under Spanish or Portuguese control. The British, Dutch, and French all held claims to different parts of the Guianas. French Guiana remains a colony (department) of France to this day. The transition from colony to the independent state has required persistence, time, and patience. Guyana and Suriname only just received their independence in the latter part of the twentieth century.

The coastal location of the Guianas provided European

colonialists with an excellent site for plantation agriculture. Coastal cities had easy access to the Atlantic trade system. The active slave trade in the Atlantic brought African slaves to the Guianas to work the plantations. When slavery was abolished, indentured servants were brought in from other parts of the world that were colonized by the same European powers. Colonialism and plantation agriculture entirely changed the cultural dynamics of the Guianas. Port cities along the coast are the dominant urban centers. The Guianas follow a pattern like that of the rimland of the Caribbean and are included with the Caribbean in many studies. At present, bauxite (aluminum ore) mining and oil deposits along the coast provide modest income, and many people make their living in subsistence agriculture.

Guyana

Guyana and its neighbors have a tropical type A climate. The central interior regions are covered with dense forests. Some deforestation has taken place in Guyana; even so, forests cover more than 80 percent of Guyana's land area with a diverse range of forests, ranging from dry evergreen forests to tropical rain forests, and with thousands of species of plants that are only found in this region. Guyana's natural habitats and biodiversity are unparalleled, attributable to the climate, distinctive landforms, and well-preserved ecosystems. Its vast rain forests play host to a myriad of species not found

elsewhere. The interior regions remain more than 70 percent pristine, but this will change if logging, mining, and deforestation are not managed appropriately.

Guyana was called British Guiana before it became independent in 1966. The region was home to Carib and Arawak groups before the arrival of the Dutch, who established the first colony there in 1616. By 1831, the British had taken control and declared the colony British Guiana. African slaves were the primary source of plantation labor until slavery was abolished in 1834. At that point, indentured servants from many countries were targeted for labor; most were East Indians from South Asia. There were also thousands of servants from China and other countries.

The ethnic background of Guyana's population, which is less than one million, is a mix of African (36 percent), East Indian (50 percent), and Amerindian (7 percent). The remainder is mixed and European. The religious background of the East Indians includes both Hindus and Muslims. About 50 percent of the population has converted to Christianity. Ethnic divisions create difficulties in organizing politics and social activities. For example, one political concern is that minority groups with more significant economic advantages will dominate the political arena without regard to other ethnic groups' wishes.

Most of Guyana's people live in the coastal regions. The almost impenetrable interior has large uninhabited areas with dense tropical forests. To protect its unique biodiversity, large

areas have been placed in conservation areas and national parks. More than one million acres have been placed in the Konashen Community-Owned Conservation Area (COCA) to preserve the natural environment and provide a sustainable economic relationship with local Waiwai people. In a similar effort, the government created the Kaieteur National Park, which features the spectacular Kaieteur Falls, which is about five times higher than Niagara Falls in North America. For its size, the falls have an enormous amount of water volume flowing over its crest. Other areas of Guyana are also being considered for preservation.

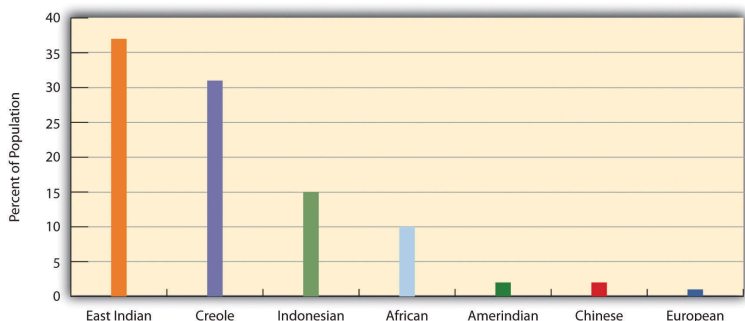
Guyana's economy is based on agricultural activities and the export of extracted natural resources. Sugarcane is the main cash crop, and timber sales are increasing. Fishing is common in coastal areas. Bauxite mining has been the main mining activity, and gold and other minerals have only advanced in recent years. Guyana's economy is like that of many Caribbean islands, a relationship exemplified by its membership in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), headquartered in Georgetown, the capital of Guyana.

Suriname

Suriname's colonial name was Dutch Guiana. The name was changed when independence was granted in 1975. The cultural background of the colony is as diverse as its history. Dutch Guiana was divided between British and Dutch

colonists. Slavery and plantation agriculture was introduced in the colonial period, and the harsh conditions of slavery caused many slaves to escape the plantations and live in the forests. These runaway slaves, called Maroons, eventually organized into viable independent groups. Peace treaties were finally made with the Maroons to grant them legitimate rights. After slavery was abolished, indentured servants from South Asia and the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) were conscripted into the colony's labor base.

Most of the half-million people who live in Suriname today reside along the coast. The ethnic background of the people includes East Indian (37 percent), Creole (31 percent), Indonesian (15 percent), African (10 percent), Amerindian (2 percent), Chinese (2 percent), and European (about 1 percent). All three of the Guianas are ethnically diverse, and in this setting, diversity creates tensions related to social and economic stability. Guyana and Suriname are the least Latin regions of South America; the Creoles, for example, mainly mix African and Dutch mixed with Asian or Amerindian. Establishing a stable government and conducting civil affairs are often complicated by the ethnic groups that vie for power and political control. Suriname's religious background includes Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and a mix of African religions such as Winti.



“Ethnic Groups of Suriname by Percentage of the Population” by the University of Minnesota is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license.

Suriname depends on agriculture and natural resources as its two main economic activities. Suriname has the smallest physical area of all the independent South American states, and it has a limited ability to provide opportunities and advantages for its growing population. Bauxite is the country’s main export product. In 1941, during World War II, the United States occupied the country to secure the valuable bauxite mines critical to the war effort. Suriname has also been expanding its gold mining, oil extraction, logging, and fishing industries. To protect the natural environment and extensive biodiversity, the country has established national parks and created the vast Central Suriname Nature Reserve, which UNESCO has named a World Heritage Site. Suriname hopes to benefit from these measures to create an ecotourism market.

Both Guyana and Suriname have had border disputes with their neighbors. Guyana has been locked in a challenge with Venezuela over its western region, which Venezuela claimed during the colonial era. A 1905 treaty ruled in Guyana's favor, but a small portion is still under dispute. The corner of Suriname that borders Brazil and Guyana has been an issue of contention fueled by the potential for mining of gold and other minerals in the area. The maritime boundary between Suriname and Guyana is also a point of contention. Suriname's border with French Guiana has a disputed area along the southern corner next to Brazil. These disputes emerged out of colonial agreements and poorly defined treaty boundaries.

French Guiana

French Guiana is still a colony (department) of France. With fewer than 250,000 people in an area slightly smaller than Kentucky, this is a sparsely inhabited area. Half the population lives in the capital city of Cayenne. Most of the population is Creole, mainly a combination of African and French with various Asian groups mixed in. The people work in subsistence agriculture or for the French government. A noted feature of the colony's heritage is the former off-shore prison on Devil's Island, which France used to secure its most undesirable prisoners. More than fifty thousand French prisoners were delivered to the Devil's Island facility during

the colonial era, but less than 10 percent survived. The prison was closed in 1951.

The European Space Agency maintains a launch center in French Guiana because of its favorable climate and launch conditions. France maintains the facility and has highly subsidized the department's economy. This European support provides a higher standard of living than in many other South American countries. Economic activities have included fishing, agriculture (bananas and sugar), and logging. Deforestation from the sale of hardwood lumber has become a problem throughout the Guianas as it leaves the soil open for erosion. Logging endangers the area's fragile but extensive biodiversity. Roads, dams, and gold mining have also contributed to the erosive destruction of the environment.

Cultural Regions of South America

It is impossible to understand South America's current conditions without first understanding of what occurred to create those conditions. This is why studying European colonialism is essential. Colonialism changed the ethnicity, religion, language, and economic activities of the people in South America. The past five hundred years have tempered, stretched, and molded the current states and regions of the South American continent. Identifying standards of living,

ethnic majorities, and economic conditions help map out South America's various cultural regions.

In South America, five central cultural regions indicate the majority of ethnic groups and the main economic activities:

- Tropical Plantation Region
- Rural Amerindian Region
- Amazon Basin
- Mixed Mestizo Region
- European Commercial Region (Southern Cone)



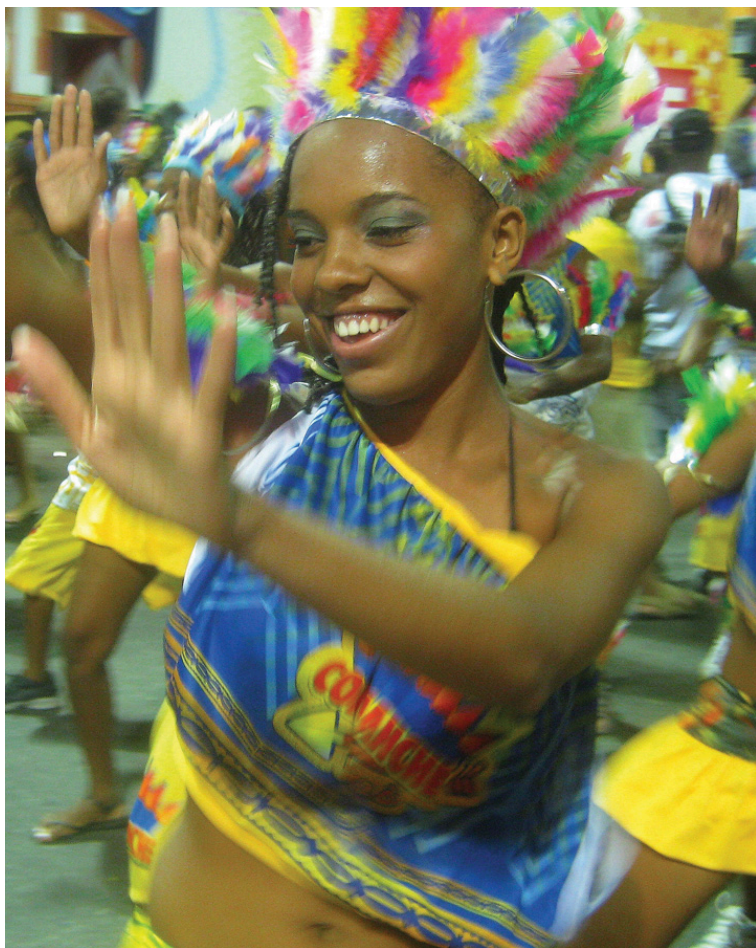
“Cultural Spheres of South America” by the University of Minnesota is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International [license](#).

These are generalized regions that provide a basic

understanding of the whole continent. Technological advancements and globalization have increased the continent's integration to the point that these regions are not as delineated as they once were, but they still provide a context in which to comprehend the ethnic and cultural differences within the realm.

Tropical Plantation Region

Located along the north and east coast of South America, the **Tropical Plantation Region** resembles the Caribbean rimland in its culture and economic activity. The region, which extends as far south as the Tropic of Capricorn, has a tropical climate and an agricultural economy. Europeans opened up this area for plantation agriculture because of coastal access for ships and trade. The local people were forced into slavery, but millions of African slaves were brought in to replace them when the local people died off or escaped. After slavery was abolished, indentured servants from Asia were brought to the Guianas to work the plantations. The Tropical Plantation Region has a high percentage of people of African or Asian descent.



“Young Women in Salvador, Brazil” by the University of Minnesota is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license.

Salvador, Brazil, is located along the coastal region of South America, where the Tropical Plantation Region was prominent. Most people in the region are of African descent.

Rural Amerindian Region

The Rural Amerindian Region includes the countries of Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. The ruling Mestizo class that inherited control from the European conquistadors live in urban areas. Most of the rural Amerindian population lives in mountainous areas with type H climates and ekes out a hard living in subsistence agriculture. This is one of the poorest regions of South America, and powerful elites control land and politics. The extraction of gold and silver has not benefited the local Amerindian majority, which holds to local customs and speaks local languages.



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The Amerindian woman and child in this photo live in the Sacred Valley of the Andes in Peru.

Amazon Basin

The Amazon Basin, which is characterized by a type A climate, is the least densely populated region of South America and is home to isolated Amerindian groups. Development has encroached upon the region in the forms of deforestation, mining, and cattle ranching. Large deposits of iron ore, along with gold and other minerals, have been found in the Amazon Basin. Preservation of the tropical rain forest of this remote region has been hampered by the destructive pattern of development that has pushed into the region. The future of the basin is unclear because of development patterns that are expected to continue as Brazil seeks to exploit its interior peripheral region. Conflicts over land claims and the autonomy of Amerindian groups are on the rise.



“Amazon River Drainage Basin” by the University of Minnesota is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license.

The Amazon has more than 1,100 tributaries that feed into the Amazon River.

Mixed Mestizo Region

The **Mixed Mestizo Region** includes the coastal area of the west and the interior highlands of the north and east. This region between the Tropical Plantation Region and the Rural Amerindian Region includes a majority of people who share a mixed European and Amerindian ethnicity. It is not as poor as the Rural Amerindian Region and yet not as wealthy as the European-dominated region to the south. Paraguay falls into the Mixed Mestizo Region, as do other portions of other

South American countries such as parts of Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela. Paraguay is mainly Mestizo, but its economic qualities resemble that of the Rural Amerindian Region to the north, even though Paraguay is not located in the mountains.

European Commercial Region (Southern Cone)

The southern part of South America, called the **European Commercial Region** or the **Southern Cone**, includes Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil. European ethnic groups dominate this region and include Spanish and Portuguese and German, Austrian, Italian, and other European ethnic heritages. Fertile soils and European trade provided early economic growth, and the region attracted industry and manufacturing in the later decades of the twentieth century. There are not many Amerindians or people of African descent here. More than 90 percent of all the people in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay are of European descent and live in urban areas. With a highly urbanized population and trade connections to a globalized economy, it is no surprise that the Southern Cone is home to South America's most developed economies.

Globalization and Trade

South America has been fragmented by European colonialism, which established colonies and economic dependence on its European masters. The colonial economic patterns did not encourage the South American countries to work together to create an integrated continental trade network. Countries outside the continent have promoted trade partnerships to benefit from South America's natural resources and agricultural exports. The establishment of the **European Union** and the **North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)** created globalized trading blocs that challenged the South American countries to consider how to take advantage of trading opportunities within their realm to protect and support their economic interests.



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Since the 1990s, cooperation and business ventures have started to form within the realm to create a more integrated network of trade and commerce to benefit the countries of

South America. Transportation and communication systems are being developed through joint ventures by internal investment groups. River and road systems continue to be managed and developed for improved transport of people and goods throughout the continent. Free-trade agreements have been implemented to support the integration of internal economic networks and competition in the global marketplace.

In 2008, the South American countries formed the **Union of South American Nations (UNASUR)** to oversee the customs unions and trade agreements within the realm. One of the more established trade associations is the **Southern Cone Common Market (Mercosur)**, created in 1995 by the southern countries. It has evolved to include most countries in South America and is the most dominant trade agreement in the realm. Full members of Mercosur include Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Brazil. Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia are associate members. As of 2011, Venezuela's membership was under review. The **Andean Community** (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia) was established in 1969, but did not gain ground until 1995, when it established more robust trade measures. Multinational corporations have supported the creation of a **Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)** to include all of the Western Hemisphere in one unified trade association. It has not been approved and has received strong opposition from Mercosur and economic

forces that support a more localized economy controlled by local people.

South America faced division and competition during the colonial era between the Span-ish and the Portuguese. Today's new era of corporate colonialism has created similar fragmentation and divisions. The level of trade between the countries of South America and the United States and Europe varies widely. Countries like Colombia and Chile have well-established trade relationships with the United States and are unwilling to jeopardize those trade connections to strengthen ties with their neighbors with less-supportive political relationships with the United States. External global trade arrangements often provide financial benefits to individual countries that might not be shared by the bordering countries in the same region. South America's historical fragmentation has not made it easy to unify the continent under a singular trade agreement to compete against the European Union or NAFTA.

7.4 URBAN NORTH AND ANDEAN WEST

Venezuela



“Charted Territory Basemap” is provided by Esri.

Bordering the Caribbean is the sizeable urban country of Venezuela. The Andes Mountains reach into the northern part of the country and make up the terrain of the northern coastal region to the capital city of Caracas. The Llanos’ extensive grassland plains extend farther south from the Colombian border to the Orinoco River delta. The Llanos is a vast, sparsely populated region that makes up about one-third

of the country. It is remote, susceptible to flooding, and used mainly for raising cattle. In the southeast of Venezuela is the Guiana Highlands, which makes for a spectacular physical landscape of tropical forests and rugged mountainous terrain.



“Angel Falls in Venezuela” is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported [license](#).

The highlands include **Angel Falls**, the tallest waterfall in the world. Angel Falls drops 2,647 feet and is Venezuela’s most popular tourist attraction. Lake Maracaibo, a vast inland sea located in the western region of the country, is not an actual lake in that it is open to the Caribbean Sea, but it is considered the largest inland body of water in South America. Lake Titicaca, located in the Andean region of the Altiplano

on the border between Peru and Bolivia, is considered the continent's largest freshwater lake.



“Angel Falls in Venezuela” by Luis Carillo is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported [license](#).

Venezuela has an assortment of physical regions, but most of the population lives along the northern coast. About 90 percent live in urban areas, and the capital Caracas has the highest population. Less than 5 percent of the population lives south of the Orinoco River, and Amerindian groups live in the interior and along the river.



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Included in the **Mixed Mestizo Cultural Region**, Venezuela has a heavy Spanish influence laid over an Amerindian base in a plantation region known for its African infusion. There is also a strong Caribbean cultural flavor, which is evident in the region's music and lifestyle. The official language is Spanish, but more than thirty indigenous languages are still spoken in the country.

Venezuela gained independence from Spain in 1821 and has developed into an urban country with an economy based on oil production. A large extent of the interior is undeveloped. Venezuela does not have extensively developed agricultural production, so most food goods are imported. Lake Maracaibo has vast oil reserves beneath it that has provided substantial wealth to the country.

Oil Exports

As much as 90 percent of Venezuela's export earnings are from the export of oil. Venezuela's national oil company, CITGO, has made extensive inroads into the US gas station

market. The country was one of the founding members of the **Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)**, which is usually associated with the oil-rich states of the Persian Gulf. In the past decade, Venezuela has been one of the top five countries exporting oil to the United States. The other four are Canada, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, and Nigeria.



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As is the case with many countries, national wealth in Venezuela does not filter down to most of the population. The wealthy elite who have benefited the most from the nation's wealth find themselves on the opposite side of the political debate from the majority, who are likely to live in poor conditions. Caracas has many upscale neighborhoods, but it also has a large number of slums on the outskirts of the city. Slums in South America go by different names, such as **barrios** in Venezuela or **favelas** in Brazil. Many of Venezuela's barrios are built on the mountainsides of the Andes.

Exporting oil to the United States does not inherently lead

to a friendly political relationship between the United States and Venezuela. There has been some political unrest within the country related to the former president, **Hugo Chavez**, holding consecutive terms in office without term limits.

Former President Chavez held close ties with socialist Cuba and the Castro regime and made somewhat antagonistic statements about the world's core economic countries. From time to time, his rhetoric and positions are not geared toward enhancing the country's political relationship with the United States. This situation has caused concern within the US political establishment concerning the United States' position toward Venezuela. Nevertheless, the United States remains Venezuela's number one trading partner in both imports and exports.



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Politics

Politics in Venezuela often plays the wealthy elites against the more impoverished majority, and President Chavez has not

been an exception. Chavez has supported socialist political leaders from other Latin American states and has pushed a globalization agenda along the same lines. The country's enormous oil revenues and its current political climate have increased Venezuela's visibility in the global arena, but how this will play out over the long term is unclear. In the past, Latin America has had a higher number of elected political leaders with more progressive or socialist views. These trends continue to shape the economic trade agreements between countries. Venezuela has been working to increase oil sales to countries in Mercosur (the Southern Cone Common Market), which is the most significant trade association in South America.



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Globalization

Globalization is also evident in Venezuela's cultural and social dynamics. In many Latin American countries, soccer (European football) is the most popular sport, but

Venezuela's most prominent sport is baseball because of the influence of early US activity in the country's oil industry. Soccer is gaining attention and support, however. Orchestras and classical music performances have also gained notoriety in recent years. Concert halls from the Americas to Europe have experienced the performances of the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra.



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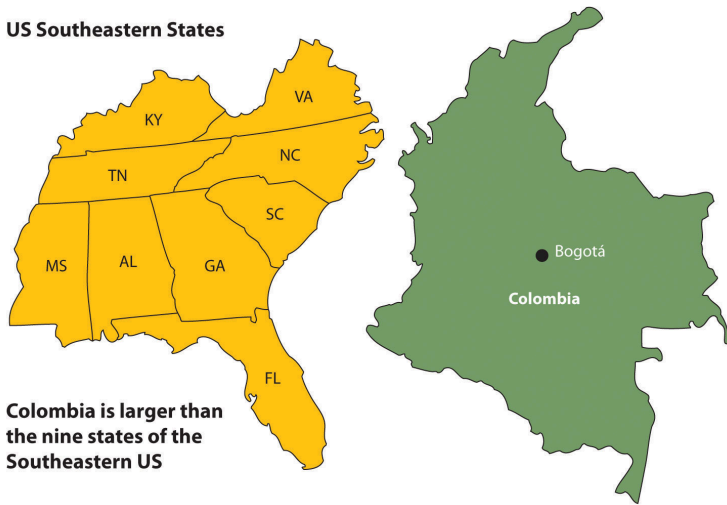
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Columbia



Three ranges of the Andes Mountains run from north to south through Colombia, which is larger than the nine most southeastern US states. With a land area covering about 440,839 square miles, Colombia is more than ten times larger than the US state of Kentucky and close to twice the size of France. Colombia borders five countries, with the Caribbean to the north, the Pacific Ocean to the west, the Orinoco River to the east, and a short segment of the Amazon River to the far south. Even though agriculture has been a mainstay of the country's economic activities, about 75 percent of the population lives in urban areas because of the influence of the mountainous terrain.



“Physical Size of Colombia” by the University of Minnesota is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license.



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Colombia was a Spanish colony during the time that Spain controlled most of western South America. Colombia became independent in 1819. The region of Panama, which was first a

part of Colombia, broke away in 1903 when the United States backed Panama's independence movement. After Colombia became independent of Spain, the conservatives (wealthy elite) and the liberals (poor workers) struggled to control the government. Since 1948, the conflict, known as **La Violencia**, has caused more than two hundred thousand casualties. During the twentieth century, the government in Colombia has not always been peaceful or stable. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, the government has become more unified, and the country has even witnessed an increase in tourism.



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Drug Trade

Colombia's tropical climate and its many remote areas contributed to its development as a significant coca-growing region. By the 1970s, extensive drug smuggling had developed, and powerful drug cartels became major political brokers within the country, competing against the government for control of Colombia. The largest and most organized cartels operated out of **Medellin** and **Cali**, the second- and third-largest cities in the country after the capital city of **Bogotá**.



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The coca plant grows throughout the slopes of the Andes, from Colombia to Bolivia. Historically, locals have chewed it or brewed it into tea. Coca can alleviate elevation sickness and act as a mild stimulant. Using modern methods and strong chemicals, the coca leaves can be converted into coca paste and then into cocaine hydrochloride, a powerful narcotic. It often takes up to a ton of chemicals like sulfuric acid, kerosene,

methyl alcohol, and additional substitutes to produce a kilo of cocaine. Once the process is completed, most of the chemicals are discarded and frequently find their way into nearby rivers and streams, which are the same water supplies that local people drink, clean with and bathe in. Congenital disabilities have become a problem in coca-growing regions because of the high levels of chemical pollution in water supplies.



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It must be noted that the short, leafy coca plant that cocaine comes from is not the same as the cacao tree that produces the beans that chocolate or cocoa comes from. They are two completely different plants with separate processes.

The United States is the largest cocaine market. Secret airfields and private boats transport the cocaine from Colombia to distribution centers in Mexico, Central America, or the Caribbean. From there, the drugs are smuggled into the United States. Colombian drugs are a multibillion-dollar industry that makes up a large portion of the Colombian economy. The drug industry's effect on the people of

Colombia is extensive—from the gunfire on the streets to the corruption of government officials. In recent years, the same drug cartels that have operated the cocaine industry have imported opium poppies, which grow well on the higher and more arid slopes of the Andes. Opium poppies are native to Asia but have been transported to South America. Opium is extracted from the seedpod and can be further refined into heroin. Colombian drug cartels, with a Mexican distribution network, have muscled into as much as 20 percent of the US heroin market. The US government has supported the Colombian government in fighting against the drug cartels and the trafficking of illegal drugs out of Colombia.



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Coffee and Oil

Colombia's two main legal exports to the United States are coffee and oil. Coffee is only grown in the tropics since coffee trees must be grown in a frost-free environment. Coffee trees, which initially grew in Ethiopia, have since been grown

throughout the world. Coffee trees can grow in elevations from sea level to six thousand feet, but most of the best specialty coffee is grown at elevations between three thousand to six thousand feet. Colombia has ideal conditions for growing coffee and was once the world's largest coffee producer; now Brazil and Vietnam each produce more.

Early coffee production in Colombia was initially promoted by Catholic priests who were influential in supporting local parishioners to grow the crop. The industry was significantly enhanced in 1927 with the formation of the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia. Coffee production on the mountain ranges of the Andes in Colombia supports up to a half-million small farms and local growers that make up a large portion of the coffee economy. Harvesting coffee is labor-intensive and can employ large numbers of workers. The seasonal nature of the harvest also leaves workers to find employment during the rest of the growing season.

In recent years, there has been growing concern about how climate change will continue to affect the region's coffee production. In the past century, parts of Colombia experienced a 1 degree Celsius average temperature increase and a 25 percent increase in precipitation. These climate changes have negatively affected coffee output and reduced coffee production as much as 25 percent in some areas. New agricultural methods are being developed in an attempt to counter these effects.

Oil has now become Colombia's number one legal export. Oil is found in fields in the northern and central regions. Immense quantities of coal are also found in the same regions, but oil is more valued in the export market. Networks of pipelines connect the interior oil fields of Colombia with the northern ports. The US market size and population make it the world's largest oil consumer, and US oil companies have been investing in the development of Colombian oil for many years. Colombia has been a developing oil source even though its total extractable resources are not as vast as in other countries. For example, in 2006, the United States imported more oil from Colombia than Kuwait, Oman, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Qatar, and Yemen.

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC)

Since the United States is the largest consumer of Colombian oil, it is easy to understand why the United States has a vested interest in the Colombian government's stability. A sizable portion of Colombia is controlled not by the government but by drug cartels or insurgent groups. Dozens of guerilla organizations also control portions of Colombia. Some insurgent groups support the government and are against the drug lords, while others fight the government and work independently or with the cartels. Drug sales, kidnappings, and extortion of legitimate businesses provide income to these

groups. Thousands of children serve in these groups, and about a third of them are female. The most powerful insurgent group is the **Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)**, which controls entire regions the size of many US states. FARC is a recognized political entity by neighboring countries but is not recognized by the United States and many external countries of the region.



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The relationship between Colombia and the United States is often conflicting. The US consumer supports the Colombian drug cartels by being the largest consumer of illegal drugs.

Under the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the US government has declared war on drugs and has supported the Colombian government with billions of dollars in foreign aid to fight that war. On another front, US oil corporations have paid insurgent groups to protect their oil assets. Oil is exported to the United States, bringing billions of dollars into the Colombian economy. The chaos in Colombia is directly related to the exploitation and marketing of its resources. It is the people of Colombia that suffer in the crossfire from this civil war of corruption, crime, death, and destruction. The United States is a counterforce partner in this situation but operates from the resource pipeline's consumer end. The largest consumer market for Colombia's export of oil, drugs, and coffee in the United States is also the most significant contributor to foreign aid to Colombia.



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Rural Amerindian States of Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia



The Central Andes, which includes Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, was home to the Inca Empire. The empire had gone through internal divisions and was working on unifying the region when Francisco Pizarro's small army defeated the Incan warriors and brought about colonial rule beginning in the 1530s. Many cultures lived in the Central Andes before the Inca, and their legacy continues in the customs and the ways of the Amerindian people who still live there today. Spanish is the official language, or the **lingua franca**, but indigenous languages are widely spoken and dominate in the rural areas and remote villages. Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia make up the core of the Rural Amerindian Region of South America. There have been border disputes among the three countries,

and also with their neighbors. Nevertheless, they all share the Andes and have many things in common.

Physical Geography

The physical geography of the Central Andes includes more than just the high Andes Mountains, although they dominate the landscape. The coastal region to the west of the Andes is generally warmer than the mountains' cooler climate. The equatorial region is rather humid. The coastal region in southern Peru is dry and arid because of the ocean currents and the rain shadow effect of the Andes, which creates the Atacama Desert that extends up from northern Chile. Southwest Bolivia has some of the world's most extensive salt flats in this dry and barren region. In the interior, on the eastern side of the mountain ranges, is the vast expanse of the Amazon Basin. Tropical and humid with heavy precipitation is generally the climate rule. Rain forests and jungle fauna can be found on the eastern slopes. The Altiplano region has the high-elevation Lake Titicaca. The variations in physical terrain provide extensive biodiversity in animal and plant species. It also supports a variety of economic activities to exploit the bountiful natural resources.



“Peru Physical Map” is licensed as Public Domain.

Even though the Altiplano region borders the Pacific Ocean, it also links directly to the Atlantic Ocean. The headwaters that create the Amazon River start in Peru, and by the time the water reaches the Peruvian city of Iquitos, the river is large enough to accommodate large shipping vessels. Iquitos is a

port city for the Atlantic Ocean with access to Europe, Africa, or eastern North America. The port also links the region with Brazil's free-trade zone in Manaus, which has access to sizeable oceangoing shipping and an international market.



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Economic Geography

The region's primary income comes from exports of minerals, fossil fuels, and agricultural products. Oil is the number one means of gaining national wealth in Ecuador and Peru; natural gas is the number one export of Bolivia. Gold, silver,

tin, and other minerals are also abundant and exploited as conditions allow. The Spanish opened up a sizeable silver-mining operation in Potosí, Bolivia, which continues to be exploited with modern mining methods. Potosí, one of the earth's highest-elevation cities at 13,420 feet above sea level, was once the largest silver mine in the world.

The city of Lima, Peru, was built on wealth from gold and silver extracted from the Inca Empire and the Andes Mountains. As is the case in many peripheral regions, the economic state of Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia are dependent on global prices for their export products. There has been considerable conflict and political wrangling about who controls the wealth from extractive economic activities. Initially, the Spanish conquistadors took the materials and wealth. They were replaced by Mestizo landowners and wealthy elites who struck deals with international corporations. The corporations exploited the countries' natural resources, with little profit ending up in the hands of most people. These issues remain at the top of the political agendas in all three countries.

Poverty and the exploitation of natural resources usually result in environmental degradation unless proper measures are taken to prevent it. The area's heavy reliance on oil and gas extraction to gain national wealth has come at a high cost to their environment. Many oil spills have caused the oil to enter the freshwater supplies of residents and pollute the rivers and streams of the Amazon Basin. Mining has traditionally

devastated the land because large portions of the earth are removed to extract the ore or mineral. Pollution is causing a loss of habitats and destroying ecosystems, and few measures are being taken to prevent it. De-forestation is being caused by the timber industry and by clearing for agriculture. Overgrazing and the removal of the trees leave the soil open to erosion.



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Tourism

Tourism is expanding to connect travelers with opportunities to explore Incan and pre-Incan sites, which are the main attractions. One of the main tourist attractions in Peru is the ancient city of Machu Picchu in the Andes not far from Cuzco. In 2010, Peru gained over two billion dollars from the tourist activities of about two million foreign tourists (Andina). Ecuador's major tourist attraction is the Galapagos Islands, which aided Charles Darwin in understanding natural selection and the evolutionary process. Bolivia has

several ancient sites that predate the Inca and have become important tourist destinations. The ancient city of Tiahuanaco and the enigmatic Lake Titicaca are good examples.

Tourism can be a great source of economic income, but it can come at a cost to the environment. There is always a concern that high-traffic tourism sites like **Machu Picchu** can be degraded by the sheer mass of people visiting the site. The environmental imprint may be extensive. The term ecotourism has been used to indicate the activity of people traveling to experience and enjoy the natural world with an aim not to damage the environment in the process. The main objective was to make the tourism activity sustainable, which promoted stewardship of the land and respect for its attractions. Jonathan Tourtellot, director of the National Geographic Society's Center for Sustainable Destinations, coined and prefers the term **geotourism**, which can be translated as the stewardship of place and the preservation of its essential character (Miller-McCune). These concepts are becoming more integrated with the tourism industry to promote a sustainable model for high traffic sites like the Galapagos Islands with fragile ecosystems.



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Political Issues

Economics usually drives politics. Accordingly, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia have endured several ups and downs in their political environment. Corruption, authoritarianism, and human rights violations have been common accusations toward countries' political leadership. To address his country's economic condition in 2000, Ecuador's president announced that the country would adopt the US dollar as its primary medium of exchange. This may have brought some economic stability, but it did not address the problems of high national debt and fluctuation in commodity prices. All three countries have undergone political turmoil. Large percentages of the populations live in poverty. Bolivia is considered one of the poorest countries in South America. In 2006, Bolivia elected a socialist president from the MAS (Movement for Socialism) party who was from a minority Amerindian group rather than a member of the wealthy elite. Several presidents have been forced to resign in Peru, and military coups have also produced leadership changes.



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Population and Culture

Population growth is a significant factor in the future of Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia. In 2010, Bolivia had more than ten million people, Ecuador had more than fourteen million, and Peru had about twenty-nine million. More than 30 percent of Ecuador and Bolivia reside in rural areas and make a living from subsistence agriculture. All three countries have large populations concerning the production of adequate food. Peru and Bolivia are large countries in physical areas but do not have a high percentage of arable land. The rural-to-urban shift is increasing, and the major cities are continuing to expand, overtaking public works and social services.

Its rural Amerindian heritage heavily influences the culture of the Central Andes. The foundation of the traditional agrarian society has been subsistence agriculture. One-third of the population in Ecuador and Bolivia and up to one-fourth of the population in Peru continue to live a traditional way of life. Local cuisine reflects the connection to the land. Potatoes,

maize, guinea pigs, and fish are common fare in rural areas. The cities are encountering international influences that are changing the demands of local cuisine and culture. Traditional food, arts, and local crafts still thrive in the local districts and for the tourism market.

This region's location on the Pacific Rim of South America has contributed to an Asian influence that has integrated itself with the local culture. Former president of Peru Alberto Fujimori had Japanese ancestry and held dual citizenship in both Peru and Japan. Similar to Havana, Cuba, in Middle America, Lima, Peru, is also home to one of the earliest China-towns in the Americas, where the Chinese culture has mixed with the Latino culture to create a unique cultural blend. Bolivia is landlocked and does not have the advantage of a west-coast port city to interact with the Asian marketplace. However, its culture is still impacted by globalization and is evolving from within.

Paraguay

Paraguay is located in the **Mixed Mestizo Cultural Region** between Brazil, Argentina, and Bolivia. This landlocked country is not located in the Andes. The country's poor economic characteristics and troublesome political dynamics are similar to those of its neighbors in the Central Andes. Like other Latin American countries, most of the population

practices Catholicism. Spanish is one of the main languages along with **Guarani**, the local language of the people. The country's name comes from the Paraguay River, which flows through the region and provides hydroelectric dams that provide all the electricity for the country. Paraguay suffers from a lack of infrastructure. The government has not been able to provide for the needs of a growing population with a fertility rate of more than three children per family.



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As much as 40 percent of the population makes its living from agriculture. However, conditions in the rural areas are poor: less than 10 percent of the land is arable. There is not much agricultural growth that could boost the economy. Paraguay is the sixth-largest producer of soybeans in the world, and cattle ranching is its other reliable commodity. A large portion of the marshlands have been transformed for agricultural purposes, but this has caused a loss of wetlands as a habitat.



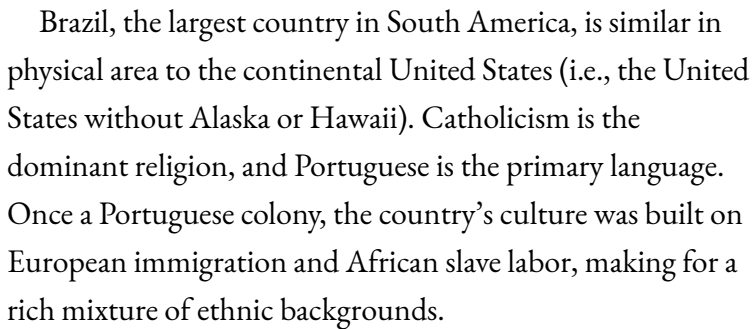
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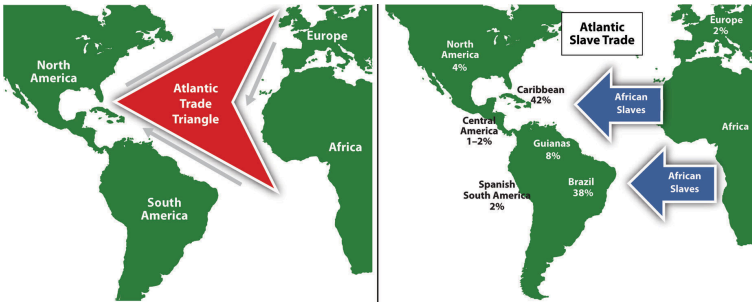
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The economy is afflicted by poverty and an absence of opportunities and advantages. The lack of an international port hinders connections to global markets. Corruption and unstable governments are the political system's legacy. There is a wide disparity between the social elites, who own a high percentage of the land, and most of the population, which remains in poverty with poor living conditions. Large family size and the rural-to-urban shift has caused a rapid growth of the urban areas. Sixty percent of the population lives in the cities, and they often suffer from unsanitary conditions because of water pollution. The largest slums in the country are found in the expanse of the capital city of Asuncion, which has almost two million people. In the urban areas, there is a robust informal market economy that thrives on imported goods being redistributed to other countries, but there is no formal record-keeping system. An enormous number of black-market goods are brought in and re-sold to neighboring countries like Brazil and Argentina, its two largest trading

partners. In such conditions, crime and illegal activities thrive, and the rule of law is difficult to enforce.





“Atlantic Trade Triangle” by the University of Minnesota is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license.

In colonial times, Brazil was a part of the **Atlantic Trade Triangle**, which functioned as a transportation conveyor, moving goods and people around the regions bordering the Atlantic Ocean. Colonial merchant ships financed by Europe’s wealthy elite brought goods and trinkets to the African coast to trade for slaves, who were shipped to the Americas and the Caribbean to diminish the labor shortage for the colonies. The last leg of the Atlantic Trade Triangle moved food crops, sugar, tobacco, and rum from the colonies to the European ports. The merchant ships never sailed with an empty hold, and their successful voyages provided enormous profits to the European financiers.



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The total number of individuals taken as slaves from Africa is unclear and often debated. It is estimated that more than ten million African slaves survived the **Middle Passage** from Africa to the Western Hemisphere, which is more than the current population of Bolivia. Slavery supplied cheap labor for the plantations and agricultural operations in the New World. Brazil took in more African slaves, roughly 3 million, than any other country, thriving on early plantation agriculture. When slavery was abolished in Brazil in 1888, the freed slaves found themselves on the lower end of the socioeconomic hierarchy. People of mixed African descent now make up more than one-third of Brazil's population. The Afro-Brazilian heritage remains strong and dominates the country's east coast. The African influence is evident in everything from the samba schools of the Brazilian carnival to the people's music and traditions. Despite Brazil being a culturally diverse country, Africans still have not found themselves on an even playing field in terms of economic or political opportunities in positions of power.



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“Population of the Various Regions of Brazil Indicating the Core Region Around the Cities of the Southeast” by the University of Minnesota is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license.

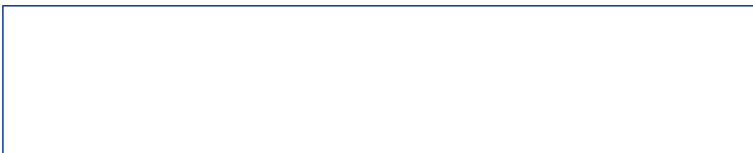
Southeast Core: Urbanize and Industrialize

Brazil's human development patterns are an example of the core-periphery spatial relationship. The main economic core area is located in the southeast region of Brazil, an area that is home to the largest cities of the realm and acts as the hub for industrial and economic activities. Political and economic power is held by elites residing in the urban core areas. The rural northern Amazon Basin is the heart of the periphery, providing raw materials and resources needed in the core. The periphery has a small population density, and most are Amerindian groups that make a living from subsistence agriculture, mining, and forestry. The rural-to-urban shift has prompted many of the rural poor to migrate to the large cities.

Founded in 1554 as a Catholic mission, the city of **São Paulo** rests at the heart of the core region. Its pattern of development is similar to that of Mexico City. Coffee production was the early basis of the local economy. São Paulo is located about thirty miles inland from the coast. It has grown to be the center of Brazil's trade and industry, but **Rio de Janeiro** receives more considerable attention for tourism. With more than twenty million people, São Paulo is the largest industrial metropolis south of the Equator, the largest city in South America, and among the largest cities on the planet.

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's best-known city, is a travel and international business center with a population of more than ten million. The city is renowned for its carnival festivities and famous coastline. Tourists are attracted by its cultural attractions and coastal setting, with beautiful sandy beaches and the landmark Sugarloaf Mountain located in an open bay. **Salvador**, located on the coast, was Brazil's first capital. Rio de Janeiro became the capital in 1763, but to further develop Brazil's interior, in 1960, the capital was moved from Rio to the forward capital of Brasilia. Forward capitals are created to either shift development or to safeguard a geographical region. Brazil has an enormous interior region that it wishes to continue to develop for economic gain, and the creation of the forward capital of Brasilia is in line with this objective.

The three cities of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Brasilia, along with their urban neighbors, anchor the core region in the south. Brazil's internal migration to these cities follows a rural-to-urban or periphery-to-core pattern, so it is no mystery why these three cities continue to grow at an unprecedented rate. São Paulo is more than sixty miles across. As migrant workers from the countryside and the rural northeast migrate to the cities looking for work, they expand the city through self-construction. Slums, called **favelas**, extend out from the central city for miles.





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Immigrants from many countries have built the cultural fabric of Brazil. Brazil's diverse population has linked the country to the homelands of its immigrants and established trade and cultural connections that benefit the country in the global marketplace. The more than two hundred million people who make up Brazil's population are diverse yet integrated, even if many still hold to the traditions or cultural heritage of their country of origin. After World War II, a large number of Japanese migrated to São Paulo. Today, Brazil boasts the largest Japanese population outside of Japan. Many people from both Western and Eastern Europe have made Brazil their home, and large numbers of people from Lebanon, Syria, and the Middle East have immigrated here.

Despite its cultural diversity, Brazil has two overarching cultural forces that have helped hold the country together: the Portuguese language and Catholicism. These two centripetal forces help establish a sense of nationalism and identity. The Portuguese language has been adapted to the Brazilian society to reflect a slightly different dialect than the Portuguese

spoken in Portugal. The Portuguese language has more of a unifying effect than religion. Though about 70 percent of the population claims to be Roman Catholic, additional religious affiliations in Brazil range from the African influence of Umbanda to the Muslim minority. Protestant denominations are the second-largest religious affiliations in Brazil. Secularism is on the rise, and many do not actively practice their specified religion.

In both population and physical size, Brazil ranks fifth in the world. Brazil is as urban as the United States or countries in the European Union. The index of economic development can be applied to Brazil: as a region urbanizes and industrializes, the family size usually decreases, and incomes usually increase. Family size has dropped significantly, from 4.4 children in 1980 to 2.4 children in 2000, and continues to decline. Religious traditions give way to the urban culture and secular attitudes of modernity when it comes to family size.

Brazil is an urban country. Approximately 87 percent of Brazil's population lives in urban areas. Urbanization seldom eliminates poverty. Though the index of economic development indicates that urbanization will increase incomes for the population as a whole, poverty is a standard component of any large urban area in most places of the world, and the favelas of Brazil are similar to slums elsewhere.

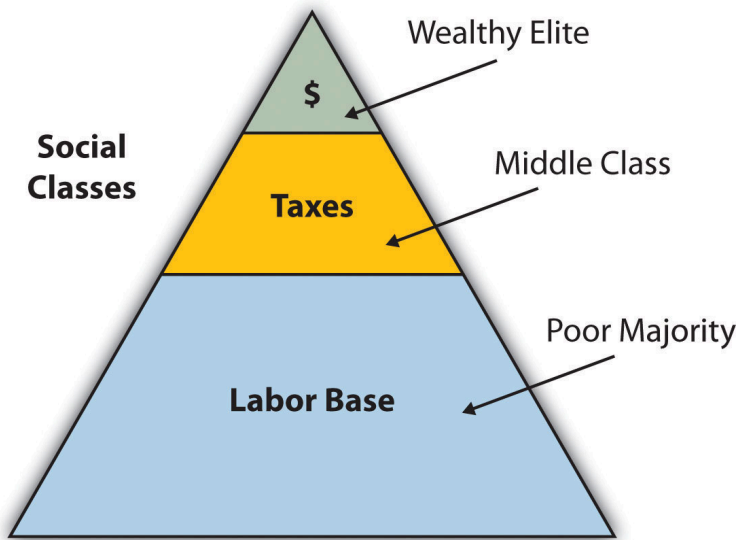


“Rocinha Favela Brazil Slums” by Alicia Nijdam is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license](#).

The favelas of Brazil’s urban centers are dynamic places, where land ownership, law and order, and public services are questionable. Millions of people live in the favelas of Brazil’s large cities. Poverty and the search for opportunities and advantages are common elements of urban life. Brazil’s core cities suffer from the same problems as other developing megacities: overcrowding, pollution, congestion, traffic jams, crime, and increased social tensions. The energy generated by the sheer magnitude of people, industry, and commerce continues to fuel Brazil’s vibrant growth and many large, dynamic cities.

The pattern of wealth developing in Brazil is quite

common: wealth and the ability to obtain wealth are held in the hands of those at the higher end of the socioeconomic ladder. The wealthy minority elite owns most of the land and businesses and controls more than half the wealth. Corporate colonialism is quite active in Brazil. Multinational corporations take advantage of the country's development activities and muscle in on the profits, which seldom reach the majority's hands at the lower end of society.



“Socioeconomic Classes in Brazil” by the University of Minnesota is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International [license](#).

Brazil is an emerging power in the world marketplace. Brazil has the largest economy in South America and is a parallel

force with the United States in the Northern Hemisphere. The country has urbanized and industrialized to compete with the global economic core areas in many ways. Brazil is among the ten largest economies in the world.

Brazil has favorable resources and labor to compete in the global marketplace. Its agricultural output has grown immensely over the past few decades. Brazil is a major exporter of soybeans, coffee, orange juice, beef, and other agricultural products. Brazil is the largest coffee producer in South America, but coffee only constitutes about 5 percent of its current annual exports. Coffee production is extensive in the Brazilian Highlands just inland from the coast. Also, Brazil exports more orange juice than any other country and is second in the world in soybean production. The vast central interior regions such as the cerrado continue to be developed for industrial farming of massive food crops. However, exports of industrially manufactured products have surpassed agricultural exports in 2010. The availability of abundant minerals and iron ore has supported an expanding steel industry and automotive manufacturing, and its industrial activity continues to develop. Competitive high-tech companies continue to emerge, and production has increased in semiconductors, computers, petrochemicals, aircraft, and a host of other consumer-based products that provide economic growth.



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Brazil economically dominates and anchors South America. The economic integration being developed throughout the South American continent has great potential because it combines the energy region of the north, the commercial centers in the south, and the agricultural sectors as complementary forces within Brazil's industrial base. Brazil is at both the physical center and the economic center of the continent.

Brazil is emerging on the world's stage on the economic front, but it also has a strong social and cultural presence. The large metropolitan areas of the country are a Mecca for fashion and the arts. Carnival is the most well known of Brazil's cultural festivals, but the country is host to many other international events. Brazil is active in world sports competitions and hosted the 2007 Pan American Games. Rio de Janeiro has been scheduled to host the 2016 Summer Olympics and the 2014 FIFA World Cup. The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (International Federation of Association Football) is commonly known by

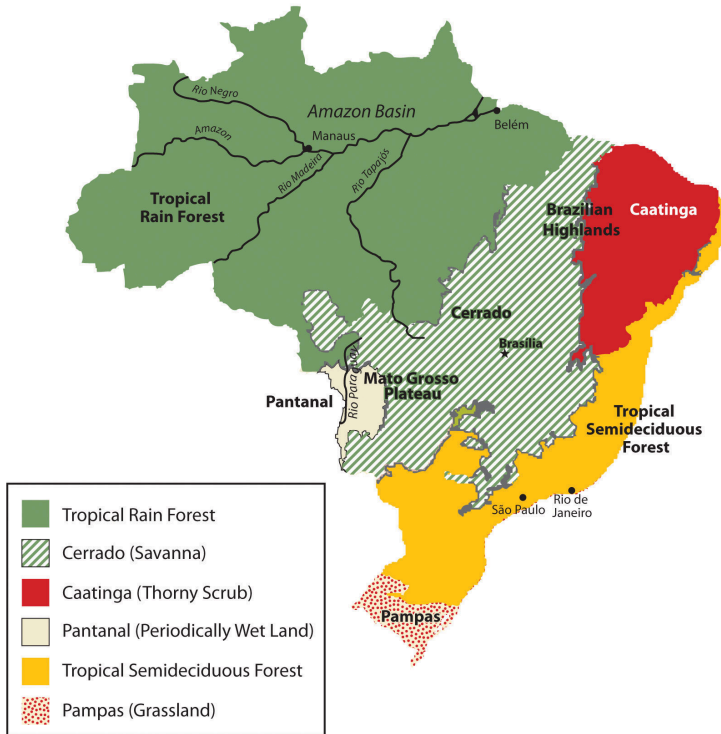
the acronym FIFA and is the international governing body of soccer (football). The 2010 FIFA World Cup was held in South Africa.

Northern Periphery: The Amazon Basin

Just as southern Brazil's megacities anchor the core of the country, it is the rural expanse of the Amazon North that makes up the periphery. A region the size of the US Mid-west, the Amazon River basin is a frontier development area that has been exploited for its natural resources. Rubber barons of early years traveled up the Amazon River and established the port city of **Manaus** to organize rubber plantations for automobile tires. The Amazon River is large enough for oceangoing vessels to travel to Manaus. Today, Manaus has a free-trade zone with an entire industrial complex for the production of electronic goods and an ultramodern airport facility. Smaller ships can continue up the Amazon River to Iquitos in Peru, making Manaus an ideal core city for economic trade, smuggling, and transshipment of illegal goods, including exotic animals from the region mon-keys, beautifully colored parrots, and other birds.

The large area of the tropical rainforest can be seen on this map. The extensive cerrado region is noted on this map between the tropical rain forests of the Amazon Basin and the

deciduous forests of the southeast. The soils of the thorny scrub region along the north-east are not as conducive to large-scale agriculture as is the cerrado.



“Natural Vegetation of Brazil” by the University of Minnesota is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license.

The immense area of the tropical rain forest can be seen on the map above. The extensive cerrado region is noted on this map between the tropical rain forest of the Amazon Basin and the deciduous forests of the southeast. The soils of the thorny

scrub region along the northeast are not as conducive to large-scale agriculture as is the cerrado.

The other regions of the Amazon Basin have not been as fortunate as Manaus. Deforestation from cattle ranching, logging, and mining has devastated parts of the Amazon Basin's tropical rain forests. The Amerindian populations have also suffered from encroachment into their lands. Only about two hundred thousand Amerindians are estimated to remain in Brazil, and most reside in the Amazon interior. This region boasts one of the world's leading reserves of iron ore; as much as one-third of Europe's iron ore demands are met through extensive mining southwest of **Belém**. In this area, a development scheme known as the **Grande Carajás Project** was implemented to create the infrastructure to support the mining complex and aid in exploiting the iron ore and other minerals. A large dam was built to provide hydroelectric power, and a railroad line was laid down to transport the ore to the Atlantic coast. The availability of transportation and energy attracts other economic activities. Deforestation for cattle ranching and farming has increased. Many poor settlers have arrived seeking employment opportunities or a chance to obtain land. The rapidly expanding development activities in the Amazon basin have boosted the region's economic situation, but at the same time, there is growing concern about the preservation of the natural environment.

Gold mining, an activity that has been widespread in the Amazon region for many decades, also presents

environmental problems. Toxic substances such as cyanide and mercury used in the collection of gold from rivers and streams have entered the waters and tributaries of the Amazon River. The pollutants then enter the food chain and harm the ecosystem. The mining of ores and minerals has enticed people to immigrate to the area, creating frontier boomtowns with few public utilities or social services and poorly organized law and order. The exploitation of natural resources exacts a cost from the environment and the local indigenous Amerindian people. Amerindian groups have used the land as hunting grounds for centuries, but the rapid influx of gold miners and land speculators has caused conflicts with local groups who claim the land. Violence in the Amazon and battles for control over land and resources have been well documented.



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The Amazon Basin is in the midst of a development pattern in which peripheral regions are exploited for natural resources or agricultural production. Much of the wealth generated ends up in the hands of investors who live in the core cities or other countries rather than local people, a common and recurring pattern of economic exploitation of the periphery. The great frontier of the Amazon Basin continues to attract thousands of new immigrants seeking out opportunities or employment. As roads and highways are built to open up new paths through the region, even more of the forest gets cut down to accommodate the development pattern. This region will continue to be developed and altered, and the government of Brazil will have to continue to control its evolving dynamics to preserve the natural environment.



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Regional Brazil

The core-peripheral spatial relationship can help us understand the power of Brazil's southeast core and the natural resource base of the country's peripheral north. This can explain the basic layout of Brazil's economic geography, but the northeast, the west-central, and the south are three additional regions to consider that contribute to the geographic understanding of the country. Each has specific qualities that make it unique in Brazil's diversity of landscapes.



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The **northeast region** is anchored along the coast, where plantation agriculture thrived during the colonial era. African slaves became the primary labor base, and once freed, they made up most of the population. This agricultural region still grows sugarcane along the coast and other crops inland where the rainfall is reduced. The inland region includes parts of the Brazilian Highland, which runs parallel to the coast.

Agriculture has traditionally required a large labor base, and family sizes in rural areas have been larger than their urban counterparts. This trend has given rise to a regional population of more than fifty million. However, the agriculture-based economy has not been able to supply the number of jobs and opportunities required for this large population. Poverty and unemployment in the northeast are high and have a devastating effect on the people. Some farms are not large enough for families to make a living on.

Individuals in the northeast have developed a pattern of migration to the larger cities of the core area, looking for opportunities and employment—a pattern that fuels the self-constructed housing in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

The **west-central region** has been opening up for development since the last part of the twentieth century and has experienced enormous industrial agriculture advancements. In this region, vast **cerrado** grasslands are being plowed and converted into broad fields of soybeans, grains, and cotton. The northwest portion of the cerrado is

the vast *Matto Grosso* Plateau, which almost covers the region's largest state. The landscape of this plateau is mainly scrub forest and savanna. Traditionally, the savanna portions have been used for grazing livestock, but in recent years more of the land is being plowed for agriculture. The entire west-central region of Brazil is a giant breadbasket for the country. Its full agricultural potential has not been reached. Industrial agriculture requires infrastructure and transportation networks to transport the harvests to market, but the government has not kept up with the development of infrastructure at the same rate as the private sector has been developing industrial, agricultural production. This region has enormous potential for agricultural expansion in the future.

Located on the eastern edge of the west-central region is the forward capital of Brasília. Its creation was prompted by the need to develop the country's interior further. Built in 1960 and now a metropolitan center with more than 3.8 million people, it was planned and designed to be a capital city. Because of its rapid growth and development, the city faces issues similar to those found in Rio de Janeiro or São Paulo. The rural-to-urban shift has brought many rural people to Brasília in search of opportunities and employment. Just as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo have favelas, Brasília has slums and self-constructed districts. Moving the capital to Brasília moved the focus from the coastal region of the south to the interior. However, a large percentage of the interior lies

beyond the city of Brasilia. Highways that reach the Amazon can be accessed from the capital, but large areas of Brazil's interior remain a frontier unexploited by development. Developing these areas may bring great opportunities and benefits to the country; however, recent development activities have also devastated the tropical rain forests in many parts of the frontier.

The three states of the **south region** are located well south of the Tropic of Capricorn and extend south to the border with Uruguay. This extrusion is often called South Brazil. The Portuguese colonized Brazil, but many immigrants to the south were from other parts of Europe, including Germany and Italy. The Italian immigrants developed a growing wine industry, and the German immigrants raised cattle and grew other crops. The region's good soils and moderate climate support many types of agriculture, which have dominated the region's early development. Success in growing rice and tobacco and raising livestock has brought prosperity to the people who live here. Brazil has been one of the world's leading producers of tobacco for many years, and tobacco from the south is highly regarded for its nicotine content.

The south is one of Brazil's most affluent regions, and it has gained much wealth from agricultural activities. Farming is only one of the region's highly developed economic activities. The area is also blessed with natural resources such as coal shipped north to the main cities where steel is produced. The wealth of the region has provided support for high-tech

industries attracted to the region because of the supply of skilled labor, access to quality transportation, and communication links. Computer companies have established software firms that have, in turn, attracted other new companies. A technology center similar to California's Silicon Valley has combined the manufacturing complex that has sprouted up along the coast of the south. The government and the business community have both provided economic incentives for these and other emerging enterprises.

The attractiveness of the region in terms of physical geography and economic stability has prompted some who live there to suggest that the region should separate from Brazil and become an independent country. Along the same vein, residents of the region have discouraged immigrants from more impoverished regions of other Brazilian states from moving here. Poor migrants seeking opportunities or employment are often rejected and provided transportation back to where they came from to keep them from becoming residents. Nevertheless, many people have migrated to the south. The region is host to immigrants from Japan and the Middle East. The progressive cities and striking environmental conditions will continue to attract people to live here.

Brazilian City of Curitiba in the South

Brazil's "green city" of Curitiba in the south region has been a model of urban planning that has been used in the development of cities around the world. Curitiba is an attractive city in its urban design, environmentally friendly attitudes, and its green spaces. The city even served as Brazil's capital for a few days in 1969 during a transition period before the for-ward capital of Brasilia was built.

The city is an industrial hub for southern Brazil and has diverse commercial activities, from manufacturing to financial services and tourism. Automobile manufacturing is a significant part of the industrial sector and is the second-largest carmaker in the country. The modern airport, bus system, and planned green spaces create a favorable environment for commercial ventures promoted via business incubators to attract new enterprises.



“Aerial View of Curitiba” by Francisco Anzola is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license.

In 2010, Curitiba had an overall metropolitan population of about 2.3 million but had used mass transit and environmental planning with high efficiency. Urban planning has helped develop a combination of streets and districts that encourage walking, bicycling, and mass transit as the primary means of access. Pedestrian malls with shopping, restaurants, and services are typical. More than sixty miles of bike routes allow commuters to bicycle to work. The rapid transit system, regularly used by approximately 85 percent of the city’s people, is rated as one of the best in the world. As much as 70 percent of the city’s trash is recycled, providing additional employment opportunities. At the same time that the

population doubled, the use of automobiles declined by 30 percent. However, the city still has the highest rate of automobile ownership per person in Brazil. The decline in automobile use has had a positive effect on air quality by reducing the number of harmful exhaust emissions. Serious urban planning has gone into creating Curitiba as an efficient and yet progressive city. In 2010 Curitiba was awarded the Globe Sustainable City Award, which was set up to recognize cities and municipalities that excel in sustainable urban development around the world (EkonomiNyheter).

The mayor of Curitiba developed a master plan for the city in 1972. One weekend, the mayor changed one of the main downtown avenues into a pedestrian-only street without announcing it to the public. At first, the local businesses objected to it, but once the concept caught on, the street became one of the most actively visited parts of the downtown area.

7.6 THE SOUTHERN CORE



The Southern Cone region of South America includes the countries of Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile. The name is an indication of the physical shape of the southern portion of the continent. The region is located south of the tropics. The Tropic of Capricorn runs north of Uruguay and cuts across the northern regions of Argentina and Chile. The region has extreme weather and climate, where the Southern Cone has more moderate temperatures than the tropics. Type C climates dominate in Uruguay, the Pampas region of Argentina, and central Chile. The Atacama Desert and Patagonia both have type B climates because of a lack of

precipitation, which stems from the rain shadow effect of the Andes Mountains. Highland type H climates follow the Andes chain through the region and exhibit their typical pattern of warmer temperatures at lower elevations and colder temperatures at higher elevations.



“The Three Main Regions of Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay” by the University of Minnesota is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license.

The countries of the Southern Cone share similar economic

and ethnic patterns. Agriculture has been a significant focus of the region's early development pattern, but today a large percentage of the population is urbanized. The European heritage of most of the population ties this region to Europe as an early trading partner. The global economy has given cause for these countries to form trade relationships with many countries. Physical geography has provided many opportunities for human activities. The mountains, plains, and coastal areas provide a diversity of natural resources that have been exploited for national wealth. All three countries have primate cities that hold a high percentage of the country's population. Primate cities are usually twice as large as the next largest city and usually are exceptionally expressive of national feelings and culture. In this case, all three primate cities are also the capital cities of each country. The Southern Cone is an urban region with higher incomes and higher living standards than many other parts of South America.

Uruguay

Uruguay is located along the South Atlantic coast bordering Argentina and Brazil. The only South American country smaller in the physical area is Suriname. French Guiana is also smaller than Uruguay but remains a part of France. Uruguay has the location, natural resources, and global trade connections to provide ample opportunities and advantages

for its people. The Pampas' agricultural lands extend into Uruguay and provide for an extensive agricultural industry with livestock, small grains, vegetables, and dairy. This agricultural base has been the foundation of Uruguay's growing economy.

Uruguay has been able to integrate itself into the global trade arena and has entered into a postindustrial development status. Postindustrial activities have included computer software development and advancements in information technologies. Uruguay is a modern and well-developed country. About 88 percent of the population is of European descent, and more than 92 percent of the population is urban. The capital city of Montevideo, a cosmopolitan city with a population of about 3.5 million, is home to about 40 percent of the population. The coastal region is an attractive place for tourists and locals who enjoy the beautiful beaches along the shores of the Atlantic.

Montevideo is also the location of the headquarters for Mercosur (the Southern Cone Common Market). Mercosur was created in 1991 to open trade of goods and services among South American countries and promote development within the realm. Current members of Mercosur include Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina. Venezuela's application for full membership is pending. Additional associate members of Mercosur include Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Chile, and Bolivia. Mercosur is on a parallel path to compete with the North American Free Trade Agreement

(NAFTA), the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), the European Union, and other global trade associations.

Argentina

South America's second-largest country is Argentina. In the physical size, Argentina is ranked eighth in the world. The Andes Mountains span its entire western border with Chile. At the southern end of the continent in Tierra del Fuego. Argentina is a land of extremes. **Mt. Aconcagua** is the highest mountain in the Western Hemisphere at 22,841 feet in elevation, and **Laguna del Carbon** is the lowest point in the Western Hemisphere at −344 feet below sea level. Parts of the northern region have a tropical climate; the southern region extends into tundra-like conditions with treeless plains. Argentina also claims the Falkland Islands, which are now controlled by Great Britain. In 1982, Argentina's ruling military junta attempted to retake control of the Falklands, but the British navy halted the action in what became known as the Falklands War.

Physical Regions

Argentina can be categorized into several regions that correlate roughly with the country's varied physical and

cultural landscapes. The central regions include Chaco, Northern, Mesopotamia, Cuyo, Pampas, and Patagonia. The Northern region of Argentina has one of the highest average elevations because of the Andes Mountain Ranges. The Andes ranges widen as they proceed northward to the west of Chaco and are home to fertile river valleys. The northern ends of the ranges extend into Bolivia and enter the Altiplano of the Central Andes.



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The Chaco region, which is formally called the Gran Chaco, extends from northern Argentina into western Paraguay. Scrublands and subtropical forests dominate the landscape. There is a wet season as well as a dry season suitable for raising livestock and some farming. Western Chaco, which is closer to the Andes, is drier with less vegetation and is known for its high temperatures during the summer months. To the east, the Chaco region receives more rainfall and has better soil for agriculture. The agrarian lifestyle dominates the cultural heritage of this region. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Chaco

region attracted many Mennonite immigrants from Canada and Russia, who established successful farming operations mainly on the Paraguay side of the border and also extending into Argentina.

On the east of the northern region, on the other side of the Paraná River and reaching the banks of the Uruguay River, it is the region called **Mesopotamia**, whose name means “between rivers.” This unique region has a variety of features, from flatlands for grazing livestock to subtropical rain forests. The most noteworthy feature is the expansive **Iguazú Falls** on the Iguazú River, located on the border of Brazil and Argentina. It is a series of 275 parallel waterfalls that are just short of two miles across. It has the highest average annual flow of any waterfall in the world. Most of the falls are more than 210 feet high; the tallest is 269 feet. The spectacular Iguazú Falls is a major tourist attraction, drawing people from all over the world.



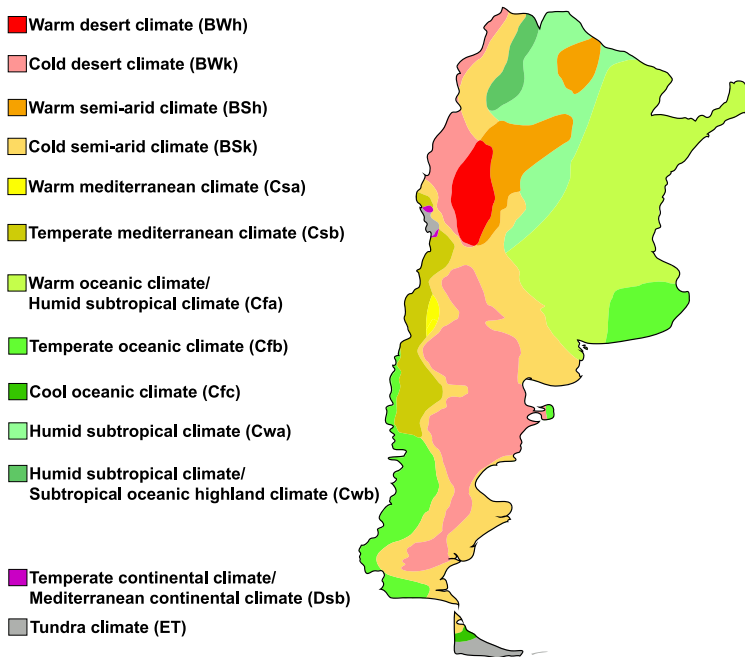
“Iguazu Falls” is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported license](#).

The headwaters of the Iguazú River are near Curitiba in Brazil. The river converges with the Paraná River about 14 miles downstream from the Iguazú Falls at the point where Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina meet—called the Triple Frontier. The falls are approximately 1.7 miles along its edge, divided by rocky islands on both the Argentinean and Brazilian sides. The Iguazú Falls is a major tourist attraction for the region.

The Cuyo region is located along the Andes Mountains in the west-central part of the country. Mt. Aconcagua is located here, along with other high mountain peaks. This arid region gets most of its moisture from melting snow off the mountains, which irrigates the fertile agricultural lands that

produce fruits and vegetables. The Cuyo is a major wine-producing region; it accounts for up to three-quarters of its production. **Mendoza** is the country's fourth-largest city. Low mountain ranges form the eastern border between the Cuyo and the Pampas, making for picturesque vineyards and farms.

Argentina map of Köppen climate classification



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The Pampas is a vast agricultural region that extends beyond

Argentina and includes a large portion of Uruguay and Brazil's southern tip. With adequate precipitation and a mild type C climate, the Pampas is well suited for both agriculture and human habitation. The fertile agricultural lands of the Pampas include the largest city and the country's capital, **Buenos Aires**, which is home to up to a third of the nation's population. The Pampas provides some of the most abundant agricultural production on the planet. The western grass-lands host large haciendas (prestigious agricultural units) with cattle ranching and livestock production. This area has elevated Argentina to its status as a major exporter of beef around the world. Agricultural production has been a significant part of the nation's economy. One hundred years ago, the export of food products made Argentina one of the world's wealthiest countries. In today's global economy, the profit margins in agricultural products are not as lucrative, and industrialized countries have turned to manufacturing for national wealth. Argentina continues to have a robust agricultural sector but has been increasing its industrial production to secure a strong economy.

Patagonia is a vast expanse of the south that is semiarid because of the rainshadow effect. This area possesses enormous natural resources, including large amounts of oil and natural gas. Deposits of gold, silver, copper, and coal can be found here. Raising livestock has been the main livelihood in Patagonia, which is otherwise sparsely populated. Patagonia includes the southern region of Tierra del Fuego and the

rugged Southern Andes, which have some of the most extensive ice sheets outside Antarctica and many massive glaciers that provide fresh water that feeds the region's streams and rivers. Patagonia also has several scenic lakes. Abundant wildlife can be found along the Atlantic coast, including elephant seals, penguins, albatrosses, and a host of other species. This region demonstrates that Argentina is blessed with a variety of physical landscapes and natural resources to help support its economy and its people.



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Population and Culture

With a population of about forty million, Argentina is a country of immigrants and a product of the colonial transfer of European culture to the Western Hemisphere. During the colonial era, millions of people immigrated to Argentina from

Western European countries such as France, Germany, Switzerland, Portugal, Greece, the British Isles, and Scandinavia. Additional immigrants came from Eastern Europe and Russia. Eighty-five percent of the population is of European descent; the largest ethnic groups are Spanish and Italian. The Mestizo population is only about 8 percent. A small number of people from the Middle East or East Asia have immigrated and made up about 4 percent of the population. Less than 2 percent of Argentines declare themselves to be Amerindians.

Old World European customs mix with New World Latin American traditions to form a cultural heritage unique to Argentina. This cultural heritage can be experienced in the metropolitan city of Buenos Aires, where all facets of society and culture can be found. With a population of about thirteen million—one-third of Argentina's total population—Buenos Aires is a world-class city. Argentina is an urban country: more than 90 percent of the population lives in cities. The rural side of the culture has often been characterized as the traditional gaucho (cowboy) image of the self-reliant rancher who herds cattle and lives off the land. Beef is a mainstay of the cuisine in much of the country. The urban culture includes the traditional Argentine tango with music and camaraderie in upscale night clubs. These traditional images may be stereotypes, but Argentina's cultural scene is heavily invested in the international trends of

the modern world. The cultural landscape has become integrated with fashions and trends from across the globe.

People and Politics

The people of Argentina have a good standard of living, and the country is up-and-coming on a world scale. The main problem has been the instability of the government during the twentieth century. The Argentine constitution provides a balance of powers between the judicial, legislative, and executive divisions, similar to that of the United States. For many decades in the twentieth century, the state vacillated between a democratically elected government and military rule. The swings back and forth have been consistent and regular, which has wreaked havoc on the economy, resulting in everything from hyperinflation to brutal authoritarian rule.

An example of the national swings in Argentina occurred between 1946 and 1955, when General Juan Perón was elected president. His wife, Eva (popularly known as Evita), became a public sensation. “Peronism” started with populous support and a shift toward improving working conditions and increasing government spending. Simultaneously, censorship, isolationism, and repression of civil rights were elevated to the point of social unrest. Opposition members were imprisoned or killed. Eva Perón died of cancer in 1952, and Juan Perón was eventually ousted from office and fled to Spain. He later returned from exile to gain prominence in politics once again

but died in office in 1974. Other presidents came to power only to be deposed or ousted by military coups. The instability in the political arena created problems for the economic sector, which had to deal with inflated currency and an unattractive environment for foreign investments. More recently, there has been some progress in stabilizing both the government and the economy, but political instability remains a factor. Argentina has abundant natural resources, adequate infrastructure, and an educated workforce. The country has all the necessary means to launch into the future with a strong economy – as long as it can establish a stable government and a sound economic agenda.

Chile

Chile is a long, narrow country on the western edge of southern South America. The country is 2,500 miles long and only 90 miles wide on average. It borders the Pacific Ocean on one side and the Andes Mountains on the other. Chile has a variety of environmental zones, administrative districts, and climate patterns. Temperatures are cooler as one moves south toward Tierra del Fuego, which is split between Chile and Argentina. Rain has never fallen in select areas of northern Chile, including the **Atacama Desert**, one of the driest places on Earth and home to one of the world's most significant copper and nitrate reserves. The sodium nitrates found in the

Atacama Desert are used in plant fertilizers, pottery enamels, and solid rocket fuel.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/worldgeography/?p=415#oembed-2>

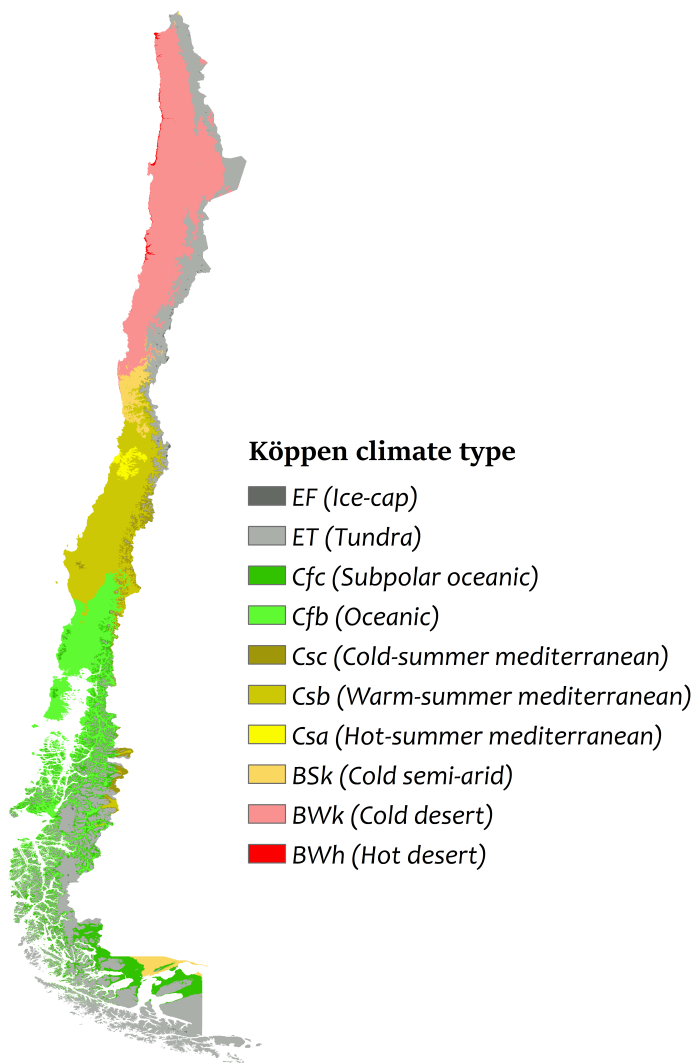
Rain Shadow Effect

Orographic uplift is when mountains help destabilize air and occur when air must rise over a mountain range. As the air rises over the mountain, the moisture within it may begin to cool and condense to form thunderstorms. Often with orographic uplift, one side of the mountain will be very moist from the storms, while the other side is arid. The dry side of the mountain is called the **rainshadow effect**. Later we will discuss how this process can generate what is called dry thunderstorms and wildfires.



“The Atacama Desert” by NASA is licensed as Public Domain.

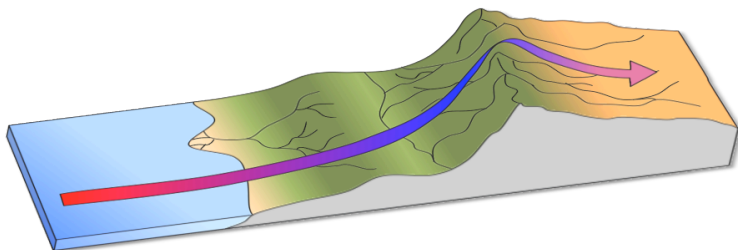
Köppen climate types of Chile



*Isotherm used to separate temperate (C) and continental (D) climates is -3°C
Data source: Climate types calculated from data from WorldClim.org

“Chile Map of Koppen Climate Classification” is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license.

The climate is due to the rainshadow effect. In northern Chile and the Atacama region, prevailing winds reach northern Chile from the east and hit the Andes Mountain chain, which is some of the highest mountains on the continent. The height of the Andes causes any moisture from rain clouds to precipitate on the eastern slopes. The western side of the Andes Mountains at that latitude receives little or no precipitation, causing extreme desert conditions in the Atacama region of Chile. Southern Chile receives a large amount of rainfall because the prevailing winds at that latitude come from the west. Here the winds, which have picked up moisture over the South Pacific Ocean, hit the western side of the Andes. The air then precipitates its moisture as it rises the mountainsides of the western slopes of the Andes. Less moisture reaches the eastern side of the mountains, creating a rain shadow with arid and dry conditions for the region called Patagonia in southern Argentina. The Andes are not as high in elevation in the south, which allows some precipitation to fall on the rain shadow side.



“Rainshadow Effect Caused by Orographic Uplift” is licensed as Public Domain.

Chile can be divided into three regions:

- Northern Chile, with the dry Atacama Desert
- Central Chile, with a mild Type-C climate, adequate rainfall, and good farmland
- Southern Chile, with lots of rainfall, rural, isolated islands, and mountains

Central Chile is the core region because it has a valuable port in **Valparaíso** and the country’s capital city, **Santiago**, Chile’s most populous city. Central Chile is also home to more than 90 percent of the country’s population.

Socioeconomic Conditions

The people of Chile are 95 percent European and Mestizo. They have worked to establish a sound education system and an increasing standard of living. The country had a relatively

stable government until the 1970s when a short revolution brought a military dictatorship to power until 1989. The 1990s brought about a surge in economic development that has continued into the twenty-first century. The political situation has stabilized, and the first female president, Michelle Bachelet, was elected in 2006. The political system is faced with the unequal distribution of wealth common in Latin America and many other countries of the world. Half the country's wealth is concentrated in the hands of about 10 percent of the population. About 50 percent of the population is on the lower end of the socioeconomic scale. Dire poverty exists in Chile, but it is not as prevalent here as it is in the Central Andes, Paraguay, or Northeast Brazil. Chile has a thriving middle class that has made good use of Chile's opportunities and education.

Chile is blessed with natural resources that include the minerals of the Atacama Desert, extensive fishing along the coast, timber products from the south, and agricultural products from central Chile. All these factors have brought about an emerging development boom and have attracted international trading partners. The stable government and the growing economy have successfully kept inflation low, kept employment high, reduced poverty, and brought foreign investment. In the globalized economy, Chile has managed to work with various trading partners to increase its advantages and opportunities in the international marketplace.

Trade

Chile has been increasing its trading activities with its counterparts in the Pacific Rim in Europe and North America. Chile has an abundance of fish in its coastal waters and copper and minerals in the Atacama Desert and has been exporting timber products from its southern region. The United States is one of Chile's main trading partners. Chile's main commodity exports to the United States include paper, minerals, metals, and copper. Major agricultural products that are shipped to the United States include processed fruits, tomatoes, grapes, vegetables, and wines. There are several good reasons why the United States trades with Chile even though it is the farthest country from the United States in South America. International trade and the seasonal patterns of agriculture have much to do with the benefits. The seasonal variations between the northern and southern hemisphere create a balance between the two. When it is winter in the north, it is summer in the south. Each has an opposing growing season for fruits and vegetables that can complement the other. Chile is an excellent counter to the opposite growing season in the Northern Hemisphere.

In 1994 during a summit meeting, the president of Mexico, Canada's prime minister, and the US president agreed to allow Chile to join the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Chile's president declared his support for his country to join NAFTA. The agreement could not be

completed because of negotiation approval by the US Congress. At this time, Chile entered into independent free trade agreements with both Canada and Mexico. A free trade agreement was later signed between the US and Chile in 2003. Thus, Chile has free trade agreements with all three North American countries and can benefit from the mutual agreements that parallel NAFTA. In this situation, Chile is an associate trading partner and enjoys the privileges of NAFTA membership without technically being listed as a member. The United States was looking to counter Chile's trade with Japan and Europe. Increased trade with North America diminished Chile's trade with the European Union or the East Asian community.

As copper and natural resource prices fluctuate, creating unstable economic conditions, Chile has been expanding into the manufacturing sector. To retain the highest value-added profits and expand its economy, Chile will have to enlarge its manufacturing sector. Today Chile produces modest quantities of necessary chemicals and electronic goods. Chile's expansion of business and commerce has been endorsed as a successful economic development model to be emulated by other Latin American countries.

Chile has strong ties to North America's economies, but despite close ties with the north, Chile has retained its unique status in the Southern Cone. Chile still has its currency even though countries with smaller economies, such as Ecuador and El Salvador, have adopted the US dollar as their medium

of exchange. As of 2020, under the new **United States-Mexico-Canada-Agreement (USMCA)**, members of Canada, the United States, and Mexico, along with their trading partner of Chile, all used different currencies. Chile has individual free-trade agreements with all three members of the USMCA, so any change in currency with the USMCA countries would also affect Chile.

7.7 SUMMARY

The equator runs through the center of South America at its widest point and parallels the Amazon River. The two main physical features are the mighty Amazon River and the extensive Andes Mountains. The Andes, the longest mountain chain in the world, runs from Venezuela to southern Chile. The Amazon River has the most significant water flow on Earth, and the Amazon Basin is home to the world's largest tropical rain forest. Rain forests cover less than 5 percent of the earth's surface but have the richest biodiversity of any biome (environmental region), holding up to 50 percent of the world's organisms.

All of South America, except for the Guianas, was colonized by Spain and Portugal. The Guianas were located along the coast, where plantation agriculture was prominent. African slaves were the primary labor base on the plantations. When slavery was abolished, slaves were replaced by indentured servants from the Asian colonies. Most of the population in Guyana and Suriname are from Asia. The cultural geography of South American can be understood by identifying the cultural regions formed by the majority ethnic groups the human activity in which they are engaged.

Venezuela and Colombia dominate the countries of

northern South America. Venezuela is an urban country, and much of its wealth is generated from the export of oil. Colombia is mountainous with vast tropical forests bordering the Amazon. Illegal drugs, oil, and coffee are Colombia's three main export products. The United States is the leading buyer of these products. The control of Colombia's physical territory is divided between the government, drug cartels, and insurgent groups.

South America's Andean West region was the home to the ancient Inca Empire, which was conquered by Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro in 1533. Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia have regions with high elevations in the Andes, including the Altiplano region with Lake Titicaca. Most of the population is Amerindian and holds to the customs and traditions of their heritage. Oil and mineral resources have been a primary source of wealth for the region, but the profits have not always reached the majority population; instead, the wealth is often held by a minority at the top of the socioeconomic layer.

Brazil was colonized by Portugal, which gave the country the Portuguese language and the Catholic faith. During the colonial era, many African slaves were introduced to the country, which added to the country's multicultural society. Many other Europeans and Japanese also immigrated to Brazil. The country's large size allows for diverse human activities. The core urban area is located along the southeast coast, where the large cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro

are located. The forward capital of Brasilia is positioned inland on the edge of the core area.

The rural periphery of Brazil includes the vast Amazon Basin, with tropical rain forests and large undeveloped regions. Initially inhabited by Amerindian groups, the Amazon Basin is being developed for agriculture, mining, and the timber industry. This type of development is devastating vast tracts of rainforest and placing increasing pressure on the few remaining indigenous groups. Large mining operations have fueled development, causing serious environmental concerns over habitat loss and the destruction of the tropical rain forest.

The Southern Cone region of South America has a wide range of physical landscapes, from the semitropical areas of the north to the arid grasslands of the south in Patagonia. The Ata-cama Desert on the west coast is a product of the rain shadow effect from the high Andes. The fertile agricultural lands of the Pampas are the breadbasket of the region, producing large amounts of grain and livestock. Coastal areas are suitable for fishing and allow access to foreign markets.

The southern regions of South America also have heavily European populations. There are few Amerindians or people of African heritage. Most people live in urban areas, and one-third of Argentines live in Buenos Aires. Chile has been a significant trading partner with the United States-Mexico-Canada-Agreement (USMCA) nations and has a stable and

growing economy. Argentina is a vast country in physical area and has excellent potential for economic development.

7.8 MAPPING LATIN AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Explore the factors leading to the independence movement of Latin American colonies.

Learning Outcomes

- Compare and contrast the societal constructs in Saint-Domingue (Haiti) to other Latin American countries.
- Identify the progression of and factors leading to the independence of Latin American countries.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You

can view it online here:

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PART VIII

MIDDLE AMERICA

8.1 IDENTIFYING THE BOUNDARIES

Middle America, the geographic realm between the United States and South America, consists of three central regions: the Caribbean, Mexico, and the Central American republics. The Caribbean region, the most culturally diverse of the three, consists of more than seven thousand islands that stretch from the Bahamas to Barbados. The four largest islands of the Caribbean make up the Greater Antilles, which include Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico. Hispaniola is split between Haiti in the west and the Dominican Republic in the east. The smaller islands, extending to South America, make up the Lesser Antilles. The island that is farthest south is Trinidad, just off the coast of Venezuela. The Bahamas, the closest islands to the US mainland, are located in the Atlantic Ocean but are associated with the Caribbean region. Bodies of saltwater surround the Caribbean region: the Caribbean Sea in the center, the Gulf of Mexico to the west, and the North Atlantic to the east.

Central America refers to the seven states south of Mexico: Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. Panama borders the South American

country of Colombia. During the colonial era, Panama was included in the part of South America controlled by the Spanish. The Pacific Ocean borders Central America to the west, and the Caribbean Sea borders these countries to the east. While most republics have both the Caribbean and a Pacific coastline, Belize has only a Caribbean coast, and El Salvador has only a Pacific coast.

Mexico, the largest country in Middle America, is often studied separately from the Caribbean or Central America. Mexico has an extensive land border with the United States; it's neighbor to the north. The Baja Peninsula, the first of Mexico's two noted peninsulas, borders California and the Pacific Ocean and extends southward from California for 775 miles. The Baja region is mainly a sparsely populated desert area. The Yucatán Peninsula borders Guatemala and Belize and extends north into the Gulf of Mexico. The Yucatán was a part of the ancient Mayan civilization and is still home to many Maya people.

Middle America is not a unified realm but is characterized by a high level of political and cultural diversity. A diverse mix of people—with Amerindian. The ethnicity of people whose ancestors are native to the Americas. (people native to the Americas), African, European, and Asian ethnic backgrounds—make up the cultural framework. This realm is often associated with the term “Latin America” because of the dominance of colonialism from European countries like

Spain, France, and Portugal, speaking a Latin-based language. The truth is that Latin is not an active language, and Middle America has created its own cultural identity despite the impact of colonialism, and the realm can be defined by its people and their activities as much as by its physical environment.

8.2 PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE REGION

Middle America has various types of physical landscapes, including volcanic islands and mountain ranges. Tectonic action at the edge of the Caribbean Plate has brought about volcanic activity, creating many islands of the region as volcanoes rose above the ocean surface. The island of Montserrat is one such example. The volcano on this island has continued to erupt in recent years, showing the island with dust and ash. Many of the other low-lying islands, such as the Bahamas, were formed by coral reefs rising above the ocean surface. Tectonic plate activity has created volcanic islands and is a constant source of earthquakes that continue to be a problem for the Caribbean community.

Central America's republics extend from Mexico to Colombia and form the final connection between North America and South America. The Isthmus of Panama, the narrowest point between the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean, serves as a land bridge between the continents. The backbone of Central America is mountainous, with many volcanoes located within its ranges. Much of the Caribbean

and all of Central America are located south of the Tropic of Cancer and are dominated by tropical type A climates. The mountainous areas have varied climates, with cooler climates located at higher elevations. Mexico has extensive mountainous areas with two main ranges in the north and highlands in the south. There are no landlocked countries in this realm, and coastal areas have been exploited for fishing and tourism development.

Rimland and Mainland

Using a regional approach to the geography of a realm helps us compare and contrast a place's features and characteristics. Location and the physical differences explain Middle America's division into two geographic areas according to occupational activities and colonial dynamics: the rimland, which includes the Caribbean islands and the Caribbean coastal areas of Central America, and the mainland interior of Mexico and Central America.

Colonialism thrived in the rimland because it mainly consists of islands and coastal areas accessible to European ships. Ships could smoothly sail into a cove or bay to make port and claim the island for their home country. After an island or coastal area was claimed, there was an unimpeded transformation of the area through plantation agriculture. On a plantation, local individuals were subjugated as servants or slaves. The land was

planted with a single crop, usually sugarcane, tobacco, cotton, or fruit, grown for export profits. Most of these crops were not native to the Americas but were brought in during colonial times. European diseases killed vast numbers of local Amerindian laborers, so slaves were brought from Africa to do the work. Plantation agriculture in the rimland was thriving because of the import of technology, slave labor, and raw materials and the export of the harvest to Europe for profit.

Plantation agriculture changed the rimland. The local groups were diminished because of disease and colonial subjugation, and by the 1800s, most of the population was of African descent. Native food crops for consumption gave way to cash crops for export. Marginal lands were plowed up and placed into the plantation system. The labor was usually seasonal: there was a high demand for labor at peak planting and harvest times. Plantations were generally owned by wealthy Europeans who may or may not have lived there.

The mainland, consisting of Mexico and Central America's interior, diverged from the rimland in terms of both colonial dynamics and agricultural production. The interior lacked easy access to the sea that the rimland enjoyed. As a result, the hacienda-style of land use developed. This Spanish innovation was aimed at land acquisition for social prestige and a comfortable lifestyle. Export profits were not the driving force behind the operation, though they may have existed. The indigenous workers, who were poorly paid if at all, were

allowed to live on the haciendas, working their subsistence plots. African slaves were not prominent in the mainland.

In the mainland, European colonialists would enter an area and stake claims to large portions of the land, often as much as thousands or even in the millions of acres. Haciendas would eventually become the main landholding structure in the mainland of Mexico and many other Middle America regions. In the hacienda system, the Amerindian people lost ownership of the land to the European colonial masters. Land ownership or land control has been a common point of conflict throughout the Americas, where land transferred from local indigenous ownership to European colonial ownership.

The plantation and hacienda eras are in the past. The abolition of slavery in the later 1800s and the cultural revolutions that occurred on the mainland challenged the plantation and hacienda systems and brought about land reform. Plantations were transformed into either multiple private plots or large corporate farms. The hacienda system was broken up, and most hacienda land was given back to the people, often in the form of an ejidos system, where the community owns the land, but individuals can profit from it by sharing its resources. The ejidos system has created its own set of problems, and many of the communally owned lands are being transferred to private owners.

The agricultural systems changed Middle America by altering

the systems of land use and the population's ethnicity. The Caribbean Basin changed in ethnicity from being entirely Amerindian to being dominated by European colonizers, to having an African majority population. The mainland experienced mixing European culture with the Amerindian culture to form various types of mestizo groups with Hispanic, Latino, or Chicano identities.

Tropical Cyclones (Hurricanes)

Above the oceans just north and south of the equator, a weather phenomenon called a tropical cyclone can develop that can drastically alter the physical and cultural landscape if it reaches land. In the North Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, this weather pattern is called a hurricane. In the North Pacific Ocean, the same type of weather pattern is called a typhoon. In the Indian Ocean region and the South Pacific Ocean, it is called a tropical cyclone or just a cyclone. All these storms are considered tropical because they almost always develop between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn.

Hurricanes develop over water that is warmer than 80 degrees Fahrenheit. As the air heats, it rises rapidly, drawing incoming air to replace the rising air and creating strong wind currents and storm conditions. The rapidly rising humid air then cools

and condenses, resulting in heavy rains and a cooler air downdraft. The rotation of the earth causes the storm to rotate in a cyclonic pattern. North of the equator, tropical storms rotate in a counterclockwise direction. South of the equator, tropical storms rotate in a clockwise direction.

Hurricanes start as tropical depressions: storms with wind speeds between twenty-five and thirty-eight miles per hour. Cyclonic motion and warm temperatures feed the system. If a storm reaches sustained winds of thirty-nine to seventy-three miles per hour, it is upgraded to a tropical storm. Tropical depressions are numbered; tropical storms are named. When winds reach a sustained speed of seventy-four miles per hour, a storm is classified as a hurricane.

Hurricane Dynamics

Hot air rises. A water temperature of at least 80 degrees Fahrenheit sustains rising air in developing a tropical depression. These storms continue to be driven by the release of the latent heat of condensation, which occurs when moist air is carried upward, and water vapor condenses. This heat is distributed within the storm to energize it. As the system gains strength, a full-scale hurricane can develop. Rising warm air creates a low-pressure area that draws in air from the surface. This action pushes water toward the center, creating what is called a storm surge. Storm surges can average five

to twenty feet or more depending on the category of the hurricane. Cyclonic rotation is created by the rotation of the earth in a process called the Coriolis effect. The Coriolis effect is less prominent along the equator, so tropical cyclones usually do not develop within five degrees north or south of the equator.

When a hurricane makes landfall (comes ashore), the storm surge causes extensive flooding. More people are killed by flooding because of the storm surge than by any other hurricane effect. At the center of the cyclonic system is the hurricane's eye, where there is a downdraft of sinking air, but the wind is calm, and there are no clouds. The eye can extend from one to one hundred miles or more. Many people who have been in the eye of the hurricane believe the storm has passed, but they are in the center of it in reality.

Bordering the eye of a storm is the eyewall, where the strongest winds and most torrential rainfall are found. This is the most violent part of the hurricane. Beyond the eyewall are feeder bands, with thunderstorms and rain showers that spiral inward toward the eyewall. Feeder bands can extend out for many miles and increase as the heat engine feeds the storm. Hurricanes lose their energy when they move over land because of the lack of heat generation. Once on land, the storm system breaks down. Rainfall and winds can continue, but with decreased intensity.

Centuries ago, the Spanish used the term hurakan, an indigenous word for “evil spirits” or “devil wind,” to name the storms that sank their ships in the Caribbean. Hurricanes are rated according to sustained wind speed using the Saffir-Simpson Scale. This scale rates a hurricane according to five categories. Category 1 hurricanes have sustained wind speeds of at least seventy-four miles per hour and can inflict substantial damage to buildings, roofs, windows, and the environment. Category 5 hurricanes have sustained winds of more than 155 miles per hour and destroy everything in their paths. Hurricanes can also spawn tornadoes, which increase their potential for destruction.

Annually, more than one hundred tropical disturbances develop in the North Atlantic, but only about ten make it to a tropical storm status, and five to six become hurricanes. Only two or three hit the United States in a typical year. Hurricane season for the North Atlantic lasts from June 1 to November 30. Tropical cyclones develop during the warmest season of the year when the water temperature is the highest. Though these weather patterns can bring enormous devastation to the landscape, they also redistribute moisture in the form of rain and help regulate global temperatures.

Hurricane Camille was the strongest US hurricane on record at landfall, with sustained winds of 190 miles per hour and wind gusts of up to 210 miles per hour. Camille hit the US Mississippi coast in 1969 as a Category 5 hurricane. It

devastated everything in its path, killing 259 people. Hurricane Katrina in 2005 was one of the most costly storms to impact the United States. Katrina started as a tropical depression while in the Bahamas. The storm reached a Category 5 hurricane as it passed through the Gulf of Mexico but diminished in strength when making landfall in Louisiana, with sustained winds of 125 miles per hour (an intense Category 3 hurricane). Katrina caused widespread devastation along the central Gulf Coast and devastated the city of New Orleans. At least 1,836 people lost their lives, and the cleanup cost an estimated \$100 billion.

Since records were started in 1851 for hurricanes in the Atlantic Basin, there have been thirty-two hurricanes that reached category 5 in the region. A few of them have reached the Central American coast. Hurricane Mitch hit the coast of Central America in 1998 and dumped over seventy-five inches of rain across Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. Devastating winds and heavy rain caused the deaths of up to twenty thousand people. Destructive Category 5 hurricanes Edith and Felix made landfall in Nicaragua in 1971 and 2007, respectively. The Yucatán Peninsula and the coast of Mexico have also witnessed several devastating Category 5 hurricanes.

The Caribbean Basin is located in many hurricanes developing out of the Cape Verde region of the North Atlantic. For example, 2008 was a particularly devastating hurricane season, with sixteen tropical storms and eight full-scale hurricanes,

five of which caused massive devastation. Three Category 4 hurricanes (Ike, Gustav, and Paloma) cut through the northern Caribbean to hit the Greater Antilles. The most devastating was Ike, which ripped through the Caribbean, across the entire length of Cuba, and then on to the Gulf Coast of Louisiana and Texas. Ike's immense size contributed to the fact that it was the third most costly hurricane on record. Ike caused an estimated \$7.3 billion in damage to Cuba and more than \$29 billion in damage in the United States. Hurricane Gustav made landfall in Hispaniola and Jamaica before increasing in strength and causing about \$3.1 billion in Cuba's damage. In November of 2008, Hurricane Paloma made landfall in Cuba and caused an additional \$300 million in damage to the island. Many of the other Caribbean islands were also devastated by the hurricanes that hit the region in 2008.

8.3 HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE REGION

The European Invasion

Though the southern region of the Americas has commonly been referred to as “Latin America,” this is a misnomer because Latin has never been the lingua franca of any of the Americas’ countries. What, then, is the connection between the southern region of the Americas and Latin? To understand this connection, the reader needs to bring to mind the dominant languages and the origin of the colonizers of the region called “Latin America.” Keep in mind that the name of a given country does not always reflect its lingua franca. For example, people in Mexico do not speak “Mexican”; they speak Spanish. Likewise, Brazilians do not speak “Brazilian”; they speak Portuguese.

European colonialism had an immense effect on the rest of the world. Among other things, colonialism diffused the European languages and the Christian religion. Latin Mass has been a tradition in the Roman Catholic Church. Consider

the Latin-based Romance language group and how European colonialism altered language and religion in the Americas. The Romance languages of Spanish and Portuguese are now the most widely used in Middle and South America. This is why Latin America is not technically an appropriate name for this region, even though it is widely used. Middle America is a more accurate term for the region between the United States and South America, and South America is the appropriate name for the southern continent despite the connection to Latin-based languages.

European colonialism impacted Middle America in more ways than language and religion. Before Christopher Columbus arrived from Europe, the Americas did not have animals such as horses, donkeys, sheep, chickens, and domesticated cattle. This meant there were no large draft animals for plowing fields or carrying heavy burdens. The concept of the wheel, which was so prominent in Europe, was not used in the Americas. Food crops were also different: the potato was an American food crop, along with corn, squash, beans, chili peppers, and tobacco. Europeans brought other food crops, either from Europe or its colonies, such as coffee, wheat, barley, rice, citrus fruits, and sugarcane. Besides food crops, building methods, agricultural practices, and even diseases were exchanged.

The Spanish invasion of Middle America following Columbus had devastating consequences for the indigenous populations. It has been estimated that fifteen to twenty million people

lived in Middle America when the Europeans arrived, but after a century of European colonialism, only about 2.5 million remained. Few indigenous peoples, such as the Arawak and the Carib on the islands of the Caribbean and the Maya and Aztec on the mainland, had immunities to European diseases such as measles, mumps, and smallpox, and influenza. Through warfare, disease, and enslavement, the local populations were decimated. Only a small number of people still claim Amerindian heritage in the Caribbean Basin, and some argue that these few are not indigenous to the Caribbean but are descendants of slaves brought from South America by European colonialists.

Columbus landed with his three ships on the island of Hispaniola in 1492. Hispaniola is now divided into the countries of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. With the advantage of metal armor, weapons, and other advanced technology, the Spanish invaders quickly dominated the local people. Since Europe was going through a period of competition, warfare, and technological advancements, the same mindset was carried forward to the New World. Indigenous people were most often made servants of the Europeans, and resistance resulted in conflict, war, and often death. The Spanish soldiers, explorers, or adventurers called conquistadors were looking for profits and quick gain and ardently sought gold, silver, and precious gems. This quest to gain pitted the European invaders against the local groups. The

Roman Catholic religion was brought over from Europe, and at times was zealously pushed on the local “heathens” with a “repent or perish” method of conversion.

Many Caribbean islands have declared independence, but some remain crown colonies of their European colonizers with varying degrees of autonomy. Mexico achieved independence from Spain by 1821, and most Central American republics also gained independence in the 1820s. In 1823, the United States implemented the Monroe Doctrine, designed to deter the former European colonial powers from engaging in ongoing political activity in the Americas. US intervention has continued in various places despite the reduction in European activity in the region. In 1898, the United States engaged Spain in the Spanish-American War, in which Spain lost its colonies of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and others to the United States. Puerto Rico continues to be under US jurisdiction and is not an independent country.

The Maya and Aztec

Though Mexico’s region has been inhabited for thousands of years, one of the earliest cultures to develop into a civilization with large cities was the Olmec, which was believed to be the precursor to the later Mayan Empire. The Olmec flourished in the south-central regions of Mexico from 1200 BCE to about 400 BCE. Anthropologists call this region of Mexico and

northern Central America Mesoamerica. It is considered to be the region's cultural hearth because it was home to early human civilizations.

The Maya established a vast civilization after the Olmec and Mayan stone structures remain as significant tourist attractions. The Mayan civilization's classical era lasted from 300 to 900 CE and was centered in the Yucatán Peninsula region of Mexico, Belize, and Central America. Guatemala was once a large part of this vast empire, and Mayan ruins are found as far south as Honduras. During the classical era, the Maya built some of the most magnificent cities and stone pyramids in the Western Hemisphere. The city-states of the empire functioned through a sophisticated religious hierarchy. The Mayan civilization made advancements in mathematics, astronomy, engineering, and architecture. They developed an accurate calendar based on the seasons and the solar system. The extent of their immense knowledge is still being discovered. The descendants of the Maya people still exist today, but their empire does not.

The Toltec, who controlled central Mexico briefly, came to power after the classical Mayan era. They also took control of portions of the old Mayan empire from the north. The Aztec federation replaced the Toltec and Maya as the dominant civilization in southern Mexico. The Aztec, who expanded outward from their base in central Mexico, built the largest and most significant city in the Americas of the time,

Tenochtitlán, with an estimated population of one hundred thousand. Tenochtitlán was located at the present site of Mexico City, and it was from there that the Aztec expanded into the south and east to create an expansive empire. The Aztec federation was a regional power that subjugated other groups and extracted taxes and tributes from them. Though they borrowed ideas and innovations from earlier groups such as the Maya, they made great strides in agriculture and urban development. The Aztec rose to dominance in the fourteenth century and were still in power when the Europeans arrived.

Spanish Conquest of 1519-1521

After Columbus' voyages, the Spanish conquistadors came to the New World in search of gold, riches, and profits, bringing their Roman Catholic religion with them. Zealous church members sought to convert the "heathens" to their religion. One such conquistador was Hernán Cortés, who, with his 508 soldiers, landed on the shores of the Yucatán in 1519. They made their way west toward the Aztec Empire. The wealth and power of the Aztecs attracted conquistadors such as Cortés, whose goal was to conquer. Even with metal armor, steel swords, sixteen horses, and a few cannons, Cortés and his men did not challenge the Aztecs directly. The Aztec leader Montezuma II initially thought Cortés and his men were

legendary “White Gods” returning to recover the empire. Cortés defeated the Aztecs by uniting the people that the Aztecs had subjugated and joined them to fight the Aztecs. The Spanish conquest of the Aztec federation was completed by 1521.

As mentioned, the Spanish invasion of Middle America had devastating consequences for the indigenous populations. It is estimated that there were between fifteen and twenty-five million Amerindians in Middle America before the Europeans arrived. After a century of European colonialism, there were only about 2.5 million left. Cortés defeated the Amerindian people by killing off the learned classes of the religious clergy, priestly orders, and those in authority. The local peasants and workers survived. The Spanish destroyed the knowledge base of the Maya and Aztec people. Their knowledge of astronomy, their advanced calendar, and their engineering technology were lost. Through anthropology, archaeology, and the relearning of the culture, we can fully understand these early empires’ expanse. The local Amerindian descendants of the Maya and the Aztec still live in the region, and there are dozens of other Amerindian groups in Mexico with their languages, histories, and cultures.

The Spanish Colonial City

As the Spanish established urban centers in the New World,

they structured each town after the Spanish pattern, with a plaza in the center. Around the plaza on one side was the church (Roman Catholic, of course). On the other side of the plaza were government offices and stores. Residential homes filled in around them. This pattern can still be seen in almost all the cities built by the Spanish in Middle and South America. The Catholic Church was located in the center of town and was a supreme cultural force shaping and molding the Spanish's Amerindian societies.

In Spain, the cultural norm was to develop urban centers wherever administration or military support was needed. Spanish colonizers followed a similar pattern in laying out the new urban centers in their colonies. Extending out from the city center (where the town plaza, government buildings, and church were located) was a commercial district that was the model's backbone. Expanding out on each side of the spine was a wealthy residential district for the upper social classes, complete with office complexes, shopping districts, and upper-scale markets.

Surrounding the central business district (CBD) and the spine of most cities in Middle and South America are concentric zones of residential districts for the lower, working, and middle classes and the poor. The first zone, the zone of maturity, has well-established middle-class residential neighborhoods with city services. The second concentric zone, the zone of transition (in situ accretion), has poorer working-class districts

mixed with makeshift housing and without city services. The outer zone, the periphery zone, is where the city's expansion occurs, with makeshift housing and squatter settlements. This zone has little or no city services and functions on an informal economy. This outer zone often branches into the city, with slums known as favelas or barrios that provide the working-poor access to the city without its benefits. Impoverished immigrants that arrive in the city from the rural areas often end up in the city's outer periphery to eke out a living in some of the worst living conditions in the world.

Cities in this Spanish model grow by having the outer ring progress to where, eventually, solid construction takes hold, and city services are extended to accommodate the residents. When this ring reaches maturity, a new ring of squatter settlements emerges to form a city's new outer ring. The development dynamic is repeated, and the city continues to expand outward. The urban centers of Middle and South America are expanding at rapid rates. It is difficult to provide public services to the outer limits of many of the cities. The barrios or favelas become isolated communities, often complete with crime bosses and gang activities that replace municipal security.

United States-Mexico-Canada-Agree

ment

The United States-Mexico-Canada-Agreement (USMCA) is the new free trade agreement for North America. In many ways, it is an update to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), but was given a new name. Libertarian and progressive socialists from the Republican and Democratic parties disagreed with NAFTA and was a campaign issue for many politicians in 2016. Concerns for libertarians were the unfair trading practices, from their perspective, of Canada and Mexico that were a disadvantage to the United States. Progressives had concerns about the lack of environmental regulations and worker protection rights. The United States also had concerns with NAFTA regarding exports of automobiles, steel and aluminum tariffs, farming, and digital trade markets. Under USMCA, many of those concerns have been addressed, along with stronger environmental and worker regulations.

Negotiations for the new agreement occurred between 2017-2018 between the member countries and was finally signed ratified by all members by March 13, 2020.

8.4 MEXICO

Physical Characteristics of Mexico

Mexico is the eighth-largest country in the world and is about one-fifth the size of the United States. Bordered to the north by the United States, Mexico stretches south to Central America, bordered by Guatemala and Belize. One of Mexico's prominent geographical features is the world's longest peninsula, the 775-mile-long Baja California Peninsula, which lies between the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of California (also known as the Sea of Cortez). The Baja California Peninsula includes a series of mountain ranges called the Peninsular Ranges.

The Tropic of Cancer cuts across Mexico, dividing it into two climatic zones: a temperate zone to the north and a tropical zone to the south. In the northern temperate zone, temperatures can be hot in the summer, often rising above 80 degrees Fahrenheit, but considerably cooler in the winter. By contrast, temperatures vary very little from season to season in the tropical zone, with average temperatures hovering very

close to 80 degrees Fahrenheit year-round. Temperatures in the south tend to vary as a function of elevation.

Mexico is characterized by a great variety of climates, including areas with hot, humid, temperate humid, and arid climates. There are mountainous regions, foothills, plateaus, deserts, and coastal plains, all with their climatic conditions. For example, in the northern desert portions of the country, summer and winter temperatures are extreme. Temperatures in the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts exceed 110 degrees Fahrenheit, while in the mountainous area's snow can be seen at higher elevations throughout the year.

Two major mountain ranges extend north and south along Mexico's coastlines and are extensions of southwestern US ranges. The Sierra Madre Occidental and the Sierra Madre Oriental run roughly parallel to each other. The Sierra Madre Occidental, an extension of the Sierra Nevada range, runs about 3,107 miles along the west coast, with peaks higher than 9,843 feet. The Sierra Madre Oriental is an extension of the Rocky Mountains and runs 808 miles along the east coast. Between these two mountain ranges lies a broad plateaus group, including the Mexican Plateau, or Mexican Altiplano (a broad valley between mountain ranges). With their rolling hills and broad valleys, the central portions include fertile farms and productive ranch land. The Mexican Altiplano is divided into northern and southern sections, with the northern section

dominated by Mexico's most expansive desert, the Chihuahuan Desert.

Another prominent mountain range is the Cordillera Neovolcánica range, which, as its name suggests, is a range of volcanoes that runs nearly 620 miles east to west across the central and southern portion of the country. Geologically speaking, this range represents the dividing line between North and Central America. The peaks of the Cordillera Neovolcánica can reach higher than 16,404 feet in height and are snow-covered year-round.

Copper Canyon, in the northern Mexican state of Chihuahua, is about seven times larger than the Grand Canyon. Copper Canyon was formed by six rivers flowing through a series of twenty different canyons. Besides covering a larger area than the Grand Canyon, at its deepest point, Copper Canyon is 1,462 feet deeper than the Grand Canyon.

Though sandy beaches often come to mind when thinking about Mexico, the mountainous regions are home to pine-oak forests. More than a quarter of Mexico's landmass is covered in forests; thus, timber is an essential natural resource. Mexico ranks fourth in the world for biodiversity; it has the world's largest number of reptile species, ranks second for mammals, and ranks fourth for amphibian and plant species. It is estimated that more than 10 percent of the world's species live here. Forest depletion is a critical environmental concern,

but timber remains an important natural resource. The loss of natural habitat coincides with the depletion of natural resources and an increase in population.

Mexico is home to a range of volcanoes, some of which are active. Popocatepetl and Ixtaccíhuatl (“Smoking Warrior” and “White Lady,” respectively, in the Náhuatl language, a primary language of the indigenous peoples in central Mexico) occasionally send out puffs of smoke visible in Mexico City, reminding the city’s inhabitants that the eruption is a possibility. Popocatepetl is one of the most active volcanoes in Mexico, erupting fifteen times since the Spanish arrival in 1519 CE. This volcano is close enough to populations to threaten millions of people.

Three tectonic plates underlie Mexico, making it one of the most seismically active regions on earth. In 1985, an earthquake centered on Mexico’s Pacific coast killed more than ten thousand people in Mexico City and significantly damaged the city’s infrastructure.

Many of Mexico’s natural resources lie beneath the surface. Mexico is rich in natural resources and has robust mining industries that tap large silver, copper, gold, lead, and zinc deposits. Mexico also has a sizable supply of salt, fluorite, iron, manganese, sulfur, phosphate, tungsten, molybdenum, and gypsum. Natural gas and petroleum also make the list of Mexico’s natural resources and are valuable export products

to the United States. There has been some concern about declining petroleum resources; however, new reserves are being found offshore in the Gulf of Mexico.

Though only about 13 percent of Mexico's land area is cultivated, favorable climatic conditions mean that those food products are also an essential natural resource for exporting and feeding its sizeable population. Tomatoes, maize (corn), vanilla, avocado, beans, cotton, coffee, sugarcane, and fruit are harvested in sizable quantities. Of these, coffee, cotton, sugarcane, tomatoes, and fruit are primarily grown for export, with most products bound for the United States.

Mexico has very pronounced wet and dry seasons. Most of the country receives rain between June and mid-October, with July being the wettest month. Much less rain occurs during the other months: February is usually the driest month. More importantly, Mexico lies in the middle of the hurricane belt, and all regions of both coasts are at risk for these storms between June and November. Hurricanes along the Pacific coast are much less frequent and less violent than those along Mexico's Gulf and Caribbean coasts. Hurricanes can cause extensive damage to infrastructure along the coasts where major tourist resorts are located. Mexico's extensive and beautiful coastlines provide an essential boon to the nation's tourism industry.

The Core versus the Periphery

In the past few decades, the Mexican economy has slowly become less centralized and more focused on the private sector. The Mexican economy is a mix of modern industry, agriculture, and tourism. Current estimates indicate that the service sector makes up about 60 percent of the economy, followed by the industrial sector at 33 percent. Agriculture represents just above 4 percent. Per-capita income in Mexico is about one-third of what it is in the United States. The Mexican labor force is estimated at forty-six million individuals; 14 percent of the labor force work in agriculture, 23 percent in the industrial sector, and 62 percent in the service sector.

Mexico is an example of a country with a clear core-periphery spatial relationship. Mexico City and its surrounding metropolitan centers represent the country's core: the center of activity, industry, wealth, and power. Industries and manufacturing have been traditionally located in this region. The core region has most of the country's 110 million people (as of 2010). Mexico's population is about 77 percent urban, with the most significant urban areas found in the core region.

Mexico City is one of the largest cities in the world and anchors the core region of Mexico. In 2010, the official population of Mexico City was about eighteen million, but

unofficial population estimates can reach thirty million. The actual population of Mexico City is unknown because of the hundreds of slums surrounding the city on the central valley's slopes. Mexico City is growing at a rate of more than one thousand people per day through a combination of births and migrants. The lure of opportunities and advantages still pulls migrants to the city in search of a better life. Higher populations tax the resources in rural areas, where jobs and opportunities are hard to find. This push-pull relationship creates a strong rural-to-urban shift in Mexico. This same trend is found throughout the developing world.

Mexico City is a historic and vibrant city but is not without problems. At higher than seven thousand feet in elevation, it is located between two mountain ranges. Air pollution is severe and is augmented by frequent air inversions that trap pollution over the city. To reduce air pollution, people can only drive their vehicles on certain days according to odd or even license plate numbers. Older vehicles that do not pass emission standards are banned. Freshwater is in short supply, and wastewater from sewage is discharged into lakes down the valley. Amerindians who live by these lakes or on the islands have to deal with the pollution. Because about four to five million inhabitants of Mexico City have no utilities, the human waste buildup has become a challenge. Freshwater is pumped into the city through pipelines from across the mountains. Leakage and inadequate maintenance cause a large

percentage of the water to be lost before being used in the city. Water is also drawn from underground aquifers beneath the city, which has caused parts of the city to sink as much as two feet, causing severe structural damage to historic buildings.

One of Mexico's largest peripheral regions lies to the south, along the country's border with Guatemala. It includes the state of Chiapas and most of the Yucatán Peninsula and is primarily inhabited by Amerindians of Mayan ancestry. As is typical of peripheral regions, the residents hold little political or economic power, who find themselves at the lowest end of the social and economic order. The highland region of Chiapas and the Yucatán Peninsula is primarily agricultural regions with few industries. However, tourism has changed the northern Yucatán: Cancún has developed into a major tourist destination, and Mayan ruins in the region attract thousands of tourists each season. Unless the local population can benefit from tourism, there are few other employment opportunities in this part of Mexico.

Mexican Social Order

The early European control of the land, the economy, and the political system created a conflict for Mexico's people. The country has experienced domination followed by revolution at various times, starting with colonial domination, economic domination, and political domination. In each historical cycle,

revolution and conflict were followed by change. The result was mixing and acculturation of the Europeans and the Amerindians, which created the current mestizo mainstream society. Mestizos make up about 60 percent of the current population, Europeans make up about 9 percent, and Amerindians make up about 30 percent. More than sixty indigenous languages spoken by Amerindian groups are recognized in Mexico. At least seventeen indigenous languages are spoken by more than one hundred thousand people in Mexico, most of them living in the country's southern part.

Mexican society is regionally and ethnically diverse, with sharp socioeconomic divisions. Many rural communities have strong ties with their regions and are often referred to as *patrias chicas* ("small homelands"), perpetuating cultural diversity. A large number of indigenous languages and customs, especially in Mexico's southern parts, further emphasize cultural diversity. *Idigenismo* ("pride in the indigenous heritage") has been a unifying Mexico theme since the 1930s. However, daily life in Mexico can be dramatically different according to socioeconomic class, gender, ethnicity, rural or urban settlements, and other cultural differences. A peasant farmer in the rainforests of the Yucatán will lead a very different life than a museum curator in Mexico City or a lower-middle-class auto factory worker in Monterrey. A pyramid shape can illustrate the current social status of Mexican society. Those of European descent are at the top of the pyramid and control

a higher percentage of wealth and power even though they are a minority of the population. The small middle class is mostly mestizo, including managers, business people, and professionals. The working poor makes up most of the population at the bottom of the pyramid. The lower class contains the highest percentage of Amerindian descent or, in the Caribbean, African descent.

A diamond shape illustrates the most desirable type of social structure: in the middle is a large, employed middle class that can pay most of the taxes and purchase consumer goods that help bolster the economy. The narrow top is made up of the richest, and the narrow bottom is made up of the poorest. Unfortunately, this optimal type of social structure does not always materialize in the manner hoped for. For example, the United States' economic planners' goal has been to create a broad social profile. Unfortunately, in recent decades, the US middle class has been declining, and the wealthy and working-class poor have increased. In Mexico, about 40 percent of the population lives in poverty.

Over the past century, Mexico's people have been working through a demographic transition noted by the population pyramids below. As Mexico's rural regions continued to have a high fertility rate, death rates declined, and its population grew exponentially. In 1970, the population of Mexico was roughly 50 million. By the year 2020, it had doubled to more than 127.5 million. However, the population estimate for 2019 is

lower than what was estimated in 2010. As Mexico urbanizes and industrializes, family size and fertility rates have declined, and population growth has slowed.

The rural-to-urban shift has increased the population of Mexico City, which is considered the country's primate city. Rural Amerindian groups in the isolated and remote mountainous regions of Mexico have historically been self-sufficient for their daily needs and have relied on the land for their livelihoods. In the past few decades, however, large family sizes have forced many young people to look to the cities for employment. On a global scale, people in many countries are migrating from the periphery to the core.

Trade and Maquiladoras

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), in 1994 was an economic agreement between Canada, the United States, and Mexico that eliminated or reduced the tariffs, taxes, and quotas between the countries to create the world's largest trading bloc to compete with the European Union and the global economy. This theoretically allowed more corporate investments across borders and increases foreign ownership of business facilities. It stimulated a shift in the location of industrial activity and the migration patterns of people in Mexico. In 2019, NAFTA was disbanded and replaced by the United States-Mexico-Canada-Agreement (USMCA).

Capitalizing on the old industrial locations of northern Mexico, such as Monterrey, corporations started to relocate manufacturing plants from the United States to the Mexican side of the border to take advantage of Mexico's low-cost labor. The aspect of cheaper labor was a benefit understood to bolster corporate profits and reduce product costs. The United States is one of the world's largest consumer markets, so these manufacturing plants, called *maquiladoras* (also known as *maquilas*), could benefit both countries.

Maquiladoras are foreign-owned factories that import most of the raw materials or components needed for the products they manufacture, assemble cheap local labor, and then export the finished product for profit. United States corporations own more than half the *maquiladoras* in Mexico, and about 80 percent of the finished goods are exported back to the United States. Although most *maquiladoras* are located near the US-Mexican border, additional factories are located around Monterrey and other cities with easy access to the United States. A significant trade corridor is developing between Monterrey and Dallas/Ft. Worth, which acts as a doorway to the US markets.

In 1995, Chile was considered a possible addition to the countries participating in NAFTA. US congressional differences, however, have prevented Chile from being accepted as a full member. As a result, Chile remains a "silent partner" and conducts business according to similar rules.

Agreements with Chile block Asian goods from making their way into the United States through Chile and Mexico. The United States, Mexico, and Canada all have full-fledged independent free-trade agreements with Chile.

The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) is a plan to integrate the entire Western Hemisphere into one giant trading bloc. The same concerns that the European Union faced regarding currency, language, and law confront this proposal. A new currency called the Eagle was proposed as early as the 1990s to replace the Canadian dollar, the US dollar, and the Mexican peso. A currency called the Amero was proposed for the same purpose in later years, but its implementation is unlikely. Any change in the US dollar would affect many countries: Puerto Rico (a territory of the United States) and Ecuador, Panama, and El Salvador already use the US dollar as their standard currency. A one-currency solution might become a more viable option if the US dollar were to crash or significantly lose its value in the world marketplace.

A goal of NAFTA was to exploit cheap labor until the Mexican economy rises to a level similar to that of the United States and Canada, equalizing migration patterns and eventually bringing about a situation in which the border checkpoints between the countries could be eliminated, as they have been within the European Union. By developing a larger middle class in Mexico, the three central countries of NAFTA would have

similar living standards. Mexico has a long way to go to arrive at this status but is making progress at the United States and Canada expense. Corruption, organized crime, and drug wars have made progress in Mexico more difficult.

Critics of NAFTA claimed that the term free trade means corporate trade. NAFTA was also viewed as a component of globalization in corporate colonialism, which only benefits those wealthy enough to hold investments at the corporate level. The exploitation of cheap labor has caused illegal immigration across the US-Mexican border, bringing millions of illegal workers into the United States. The Mexican government has not adequately addressed Mexico's economic conditions to provide jobs and opportunities for the people or use the wealth held or controlled by the elite minority to enhance the middle- and lower-class majority's economic opportunities.

Chiapas and Trade

The state of Chiapas in Mexico has an unequal distribution of wealth, a situation evident in most core-peripheral spatial relationships. Located in Mexico's rural highlands and inhabited by a minority group that holds to the Mayan language and traditions, Chiapas has few economic opportunities for its people. Wealthy landowners and the ruling elite who have long held power have routinely taken

advantage of peasant farmers. The aristocracy uses the best land and pays low wages to local workers. Medical care, education, and government assistance have been slow in coming to this region and its people.

In the past few decades, various Amerindian groups have organized in the rural areas of Mexico in an attempt to counter the power of the political elite. In Chiapas, a group calling itself the Zapatista National Liberation Army (ZNLA) organized to coordinate an offensive against the Mexican government in various regions. The ZNLA was organized to coincide with NAFTA's implementation among the United States, Canada, and Mexico in January of 1994. As each country claimed benefits from this agreement, Chiapas' peripheral region sought to receive their share of those benefits. The Mexican military quickly reacted to the ZNLA offensive and rapidly drove them out of their occupied towns. The publicity and the international press coverage helped the ZNLA get their message out to the rest of the world.

Since 1994, the ZNLA's guerilla forces have used their familiarity with the mountains for sanctuary and have faced off against the Mexican military when negotiations with the federal government have broken down. The ZNLA wants greater recognition of their rights and heritage and more autonomy over their region and lands. This devolutionary process resembles that of various European regions desiring similar recognition of rights.

Similar conflicts are ongoing in other rural states of Mexico, with the majority of Amerindian populations. There is a direct relationship between social status and wealth and skin color in most regions of Mexico. The skin tone is directly related to a person's social status. On the one hand, Aztec and Mayan heritage is celebrated; on the other hand, their identity and darker skin relegate them to a lower socioeconomic status.

Illegal Drug Trafficking in Mexico

The illegal drug trade is a multibillion-dollar industry, and Mexico has traditionally been the transitional area or stop-off point between the South American drug-producing areas and entrance into US markets. Cocaine, marijuana, and more recently, heroin was produced in the Andes Mountains of South America and shipped north to the United States. Colombian cartels were once the main controllers of illegal drugs in the Western Hemisphere. However, in recent decades, organized crime units in Mexico have muscled in on the control of drugs coming through Mexico, making deals with their South American counterparts to become the leading traffickers of drugs into the United States, and the influence and power of Mexican drug cartels have increased immensely since the demise of the Colombian cartels in the 1990s. Enormous profits fuel the competition for control. Just as the

United States has declared war on drugs and has used its Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) as a primary arm in combating the industry, Mexico has had to address its illegal drug trade issues.

Mexico's official murder rate in 2017 was approximately 30,000 people, which is the highest body count in 20 years. The vast majority of these deaths are caused by the drug wars between the Narco Cartels and the Mexican government. This directly impacts cities like Acapulco, changing society as it tries to adapt to the violence.

Illegal drug income flowing into Mexico has become a significant part of the economy in specific areas. Drug kingpins have used their economic power to buy off local police forces and silence opposition. They have also been known to provide poor neighborhoods with funding for services that would typically be designated as government obligations. These actions have often provided a mixed reaction within the population in local areas. The drug cartels have become an integrated part of the fabric of Mexico.

To combat the situation, the Mexican government has been engaged in its internal war against the illegal drug trade. The battles between the drug cartels and the Mexican government have created a severe internal conflict in the country, killing thousands of innocent bystanders in the crossfire. Armed conflicts between rival cartels or local gangs have increased the

violence that has been intensifying since 2000. Mexican cities near the US border have experienced increased incidences of major drug-related murders and gang violence. Higher volumes of firearms trafficking from the United States and abroad into Mexico have fueled the armed conflicts. Military and police casualties have increased, and the number of drug-related shootings is on the rise.

Cartels have been known to use jet airliners, semi-trucks, and even submarines in their attempts to ship illegal drugs into the United States. Large tunnels have been found beneath the US-Mexican border that was used to smuggle drugs. Intimidation and corruption have been standard practices used by drug traffickers to protect their interests. Bribes, payoffs, and corruption have been challenging to battle in a country with a high percentage of the population living in poor conditions.

Border Crisis along the Northern Border

Thousands of maquiladoras flourish along the US-Mexican border, although the Mexican government has also promoted maquiladoras in other parts of Mexico. Maquiladoras provide jobs for workers in Mexico and provide cheaper goods for US consumers. However, this system has inherent problems. Labor unions in the United States complain that the high-

paying industrial jobs that support the US middle class are being lost to cheap Mexican labor. Labor laws in Mexico are less rigorous than US laws, allowing for longer work hours and fewer benefits for maquiladora employees. Also, Mexico's pollution standards are not as restrictive as those in the United States, giving rise to environmental concerns. The central US-Mexican border region has dry or arid type B climates with fresh water in short supply, and water is in high demand in industrial processes. With the rapid increase in employment along the border, many people who work in the factories do not have adequate housing or utilities. Extensive slum areas have grown around maquiladora zones with little law enforcement, high crime, and few services.

The US-Mexican border region has become a strong pull factor, enticing poor people who seek greater opportunities and advantages to move from Mexico City and other southern regions of Mexico to the border region to look for work. When they do not find work, they are tempted to cross the US border illegally. The United States is considered a land of opportunity and attracts immigrants, both legal and illegal, from Mexico. For political and economic reasons, the main US political parties have been hesitant to seriously address the millions of illegal immigrants' problems.

It is not only US corporations that have taken advantage of the explosion in the number of maquiladoras in Mexico. European and Japanese companies have also muscled in on a

share of the market. Capitalism thrives on cheap labor and accessible raw materials. With much of this industrial activity in Mexico's northern sector, it becomes easier to understand the difficult issues confronting Mexico's southernmost state of Chiapas, where there is little benefit from economic activity growth.

8.5 CENTRAL AMERICA

Physical Environment of Central America

Central America is a land bridge connecting the North and South American continents, with the Pacific Ocean to its west and the Caribbean Sea to its east. A central mountain chain dominates the interior from Mexico to Panama. The coastal plains of Central America have tropical and humid type A climates. In the highland interior, the climate changes with elevation. As one travels up the mountainsides, the temperature cools. Only Belize is located away from this interior mountain chain. Its fertile soils and colder climate have attracted more people to live in the mountainous regions than along the coast.

Hurricanes, tropical storms, earthquakes, and volcanic activity produce recurring environmental problems for Central America. In 1998, Hurricane Mitch swept through the region, devastating Nicaragua and El Salvador, which had already been devastated by civil wars in previous years.

The volcanic activity along the central mountain chain has

provided fertile volcanic soils in the mountain region, which has attracted people to work the land for agriculture. Central America has traditionally been a rural peripheral economic area where most people have worked the land. Family size has been larger than average, and rural-to-urban shift dominates the migration patterns as the region urbanizes and industrializes. Natural disasters, poverty, large families, and a lack of economic opportunities have made life difficult in much of Central America.

Altitudinal Zonation

High mountain ranges run the length of Central and South America. The Andes Mountains of South America are the longest mountain chain globally, and a large section of this mountain range is in the tropics. Tropical regions usually have humid type A climates. What is significant in Latin America is that while the climate at the Andes' base may be type A, the different climate zones and related human activity vary as one moves up the mountain in elevation. Mountains have different climates at the base than at the summit. Type H highland climates describe mountainous areas that exhibit different climate types at varying degrees of elevation.

Human activity varies with elevation, and the activities can be categorized into zones according to altitudinal zonation. Each zone has its type of vegetation and agricultural activity suited

to the climate found at that elevation. For every thousand-foot increase in elevation, the temperature drops 3.5 °F. In the tropical areas of Latin America, there are five established temperature-altitude zones. Elevation zones may vary depending on a particular location's distance from the equator.

Tierra caliente (hot land): Sea level to 2,500 feet

Tierra templada (temperate land): 2,500 to 6,000 feet

Tierra fria (cold land): 6,000 to 12,000 feet

Tierra helada (frozen land): 12,000 to 15,000 feet

Tierra nevada (snowy land): Above 15,000 feet

Tierra Caliente (Hot Land): Sea Level to 2,500 Feet

From sea level to 2,500 feet are the humid tropical lowlands found on the coastal plains. The coastal plains on the west coast of Middle America are relatively narrow, but they are wider along the Caribbean coast. Vegetation includes tropical rain forests and tropical commercial plantations. Food crops include bananas, manioc, sweet potatoes, yams, corn, beans, and rice. Livestock is raised at this level, and sugarcane is an

important cash crop. Tropical diseases are most common, and large human populations are not commonly attracted to this zone.

Tierra Templada (Temperate Land): 2,501 to 6,000 Feet

From 2,500 to 6,000 feet is a zone with cooler temperatures than at sea level. This is the most populated zone of Latin America. Four of the seven capitals of the Central American republics are found in this zone. Just as temperate climates attract human activity, this zone provides a pleasant environment for habitation. The best coffee is grown at these elevations, and most other food crops can be grown here, including wheat and small grains.

Tierra Fria (Cold Land): 6,001 to 12,000 Feet

From 6,000 to 12,000 feet is the highest zone found in Middle America. This zone is usually the limit of the tree line; few trees grow north of this zone. The shorter growing season and cooler temperatures found at these elevations are still adequate for growing wheat, barley, potatoes, or corn. Livestock can graze and be raised on the grasslands. The Inca Empire of the Andes Mountains in South America flourished in this zone.

Tierra Helada (Frozen Land): 12,001 to 15,000 Feet

Some classify this as the “Puna” zone. At this elevation, there are no trees. The only human activity is raising livestock such as sheep or llama on any short grasses available in the highland meadows. Snow and cold dominate the zone. Central America does not have a Tierra helada zone, but it is found in the higher Andes Mountain Ranges of South America.

Tierra Nevada (Snowy Land): Above 15,000 Feet

There is little human activity above 15,000 feet. Permanent snow and ice are found here, and little vegetation is available. Many classification systems combine this zone with the Tierra helada zone.

European Colonialism

Amerindian groups dominated Central America before the European colonial powers arrived. The Maya are still prominent in the north and make up about half the population of Guatemala. Other Amerindian groups are encountered farther south, and many still speak their indigenous languages and hold to traditional cultural customs. People of European stock or upper-class mestizos now control political and economic power in Central America. Indigenous

Amerindian groups find themselves on the lower rung of the socioeconomic ladder.

During colonial times, the Spanish conquistadors dominated Central America except for Belize, a British colony called British Honduras until 1981. Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica were Spanish colonies and became independent of Spain in the 1820s. Panama was a part of Colombia and was not independent until the United States prompted an independence movement in 1903 to develop the Panama Canal. As is usually the case with colonialism, the main religion and the lingua franca of the Central American states are those of the European colonizers, in this case, Roman Catholicism and Spanish. In some locations, the language and religion take on variant forms that mix the traditional with the European to create a unique local cultural environment.

People and Population

About 50 percent of Central American people live in rural areas, and because the economy is agriculturally based, family size has traditionally been large. Until the 1990s, family size averaged as high as six children. As the pressures of the postindustrial age have influenced Central America, average family size has decreased and is now about half that of the pre-1990s and is declining. For example, in Nicaragua, the

World Bank reports that the average woman has 2.68 children during her lifetime (The World Bank). The Rural-to-urban shift is typical, and as the region experiences more urbanization and industrialization, family size will decrease even more.

During the twentieth century, much of Central America experienced development similar to Stage 2 of the Economic Development Index. An influx of light industry and manufacturing firms seeking cheap labor has pushed many areas into Stage 3 development. The primate cities and main urban centers are feeling the impact of this shift.

Over the years, larger family sizes have created populations with a higher percentage of young people and a lower percentage of older people. Cities are often overwhelmed with young migrants from the countryside with few or no places to live. Rapid urbanization places a strain on urban areas because services, infrastructure, and housing cannot keep pace with population growth. Slums with self-constructed housing districts emerge around the existing urban infrastructure. The United States has also become a destination for people looking for opportunities or advantages not found in these cities.

CAFTA and Neocolonialism

Just as Canada, the United States, and Mexico signed the

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) into law in 1994, the United States and five Central American states signed the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) in 2006. The agreement was signed by trade representatives from El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and the United States. The CAFTA-DR agreement, which includes the Dominican Republic, was ratified in 2007. In 2010, Costa Rica's legislature approved a measure to join the agreement. CAFTA is supported by the same forces that advocated neocolonialism in other regions of the world.

CAFTA's purpose is to reduce trade barriers between the United States and Central America, affecting labor, human rights, and the flow of wealth. During negotiations for CAFTA, US political forces cited CAFTA as a top priority and argued that it would help move forward the possibility of the larger Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), which would create a single market for the Americas.

Countries gain national wealth in the three main ways: by growing it, extracting it, or manufacturing it. These methods, however, contribute to a nation's wealth only if the wealth stays within the country. With free-trade agreements such as NAFTA and CAFTA, the wealth gained from manufacturing, which has the highest value-added profits, does not stay in the country of production. Instead, the profits are carted off to the foreign corporation that controls the industrial factory. Multinational corporations see Central American countries

as profitable sites for industrial; they can exploit cheap labor sources and, at the same time, provide jobs for local people. These advantages should result in lower product costs for consumers.

There have been protest marches and anti-CAFTA activities in many Central American countries. Costa Rica, one of the most stable countries in the region, had problems passing the agreement because of voter opposition. One of the primary arguments opponents to CAFTA make is that the wealth generated by the exploitation of the available cheap labor will not stay in Central America; instead, it will be removed by the wealthy core nations, just as European colonialism removed the wealth generated by the conquistadors and shipped it back to Europe. Those who oppose CAFTA and corporate colonialism also cite the following arguments:

- A popular argument against CAFTA is that “free trade” is the same as corporate trade. Expanding corporate-controlled free trade makes the global south more dependent on the global north, and the corporations reap the profits.
- CAFTA promotes corporate colonialism or neocolonialism. The “have” countries dominate and take advantage of the “have-not” countries to an ever-greater extent. The small countries of Central America cannot compete with large US corporations, which pressure and influence political systems to provide advantages and

opportunities to exploit the smaller, weaker nations of Central America.

- CAFTA diminishes the power of Central American countries to regulate their economies and protect their citizens; that is, the concentration of power in the hands of corporations with strong ties to those in political power allows the elite to maintain control over a country's economy.
- CAFTA forces small developing countries with no chance of competing successfully against the United States to open their markets to powerful US corporations.
- CAFTA leads to further privatization of social services, decreases public access to essential services, and gives corporations more money and control.
- CAFTA forces competition for the lowest wages and lowest production costs, which drives wages down in the United States and keeps them down throughout Central America while at the same time providing considerable profits to multinational corporations.
- CAFTA supports the claim that it provides jobs, infrastructure, and opportunities to Central America's developing countries. In return, cheap consumer goods are available to the people. The globalized economy is a mixed game: on the one hand, consumer goods are inexpensive to purchase; on the other hand, the world's wealth flows into the hands of a few people at the top

and is not always shared with most of the people who contribute to it.

The Northern Triangle

Central American countries might share similar climate patterns, but they do not share similar political or economic dynamics. The region's political geography is diverse and ranges from a history of total civil war to peace and stability. The growing pains of each country as it competes and engages in the global economy often cause turmoil and conflict. Each state has found a different path, but each has dealt with similar issues with varying degrees of success. Barriers to progress range from political corruption to gang violence. Stability has come to the communities that have found new avenues of gaining wealth and creating a higher standard of living.

Guatemala

In the late 1900s, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua experienced devastating civil wars that divided their people and destroyed their economies. In the Mayan state of Guatemala, the 1960–96 civil war was fought between the right-wing Ladinos (urbanized mestizos and Maya) and the left-wing rural Amerindian Mayan majority. The genesis of this war was democratically elected president Jacobo Arbenz's social

reforms, which conflicted with the interests of the US-based United Fruit Company. In 1954, US-backed forces, funded by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), overthrew Arbenz and laid the groundwork for civil unrest for the next four decades. Right-wing and left-wing death squads terrorized the country until the latter 1990s when the Catholic Church brokered a peace accord. The poor and devastated country is now moving forward on its path to recovery.

El Salvador

In the coffee republic of El Salvador, the civil war of 1979–92 was fought between the government-backed wealthy land-owning elite and the peasants who worked the land and lived in poverty. A few powerful families owned almost the entire country. Coffee is a significant export crop for El Salvador, a country with a mild climate at its higher elevations. Arabica coffee grows well at these elevations. To protect their economic interests, US coffee companies backed the wealthy elite in El Salvador and lobbied the US government's support. US military advisors and CIA support aided El Salvador's government forces. At the same time, the peasants of El Salvador were soliciting support from Nicaragua and Cuba, which were backed by the Soviet Union.

After the civil war devastated the country and killed an estimated seventy-five thousand people, a peace agreement that

included land reform was finally reached in 1992. El Salvador is a small country about the size of the US state of New Jersey, with more than six million people. The war devastated this rural mountainous country and forced more than three hundred thousand people to become refugees in other countries. Many migrated north to the United States. Recovery from the war has been challenging and has been hampered by natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes.

Nicaragua

At the same time that civil wars were going on in Guatemala and El Salvador, Nicaragua was conflicted. After US marines occupied the country from 1926 to 1933, the US-backed Somoza family took power and remained there for decades. By 1978, violent opposition to governmental manipulation and corruption engulfed the country. An estimated fifty thousand people died in a bitter civil war that ousted the Somoza regime and brought the Marxist Sandinista government to power in 1979.

Nicaraguan aid to leftist rebels in El Salvador caused the United States to sponsor anti-Sandinista contra (short for counterrevolutionary) guerrillas through much of the 1980s and bring about a second Nicaraguan civil war. In 1982, the US Congress blocked direct US aid to the contra forces

through the Boland Amendment. Covert activity by CIA operatives continued to fund the contra forces by selling surplus US arms to Iran, brokered through Israel. Despite a US embargo against Iran and animosity between Israel and Iran, the deals went through with hopes of negotiating the release of US hostages in Lebanon. The profits from these illegal covert arms sales were funneled into support for Nicaragua's contra forces, and the scandal, known as the Iran-Contra Affair, has become a standard reference for US intervention in Central America.

In 1990, at the end of the Sandinista-Contra War, democratic elections were carried out. Regardless of the Iran-Contra Affair, the US-backed candidate defeated the Sandinista incumbent. The civil war between the Sandinistas and the contras cost an estimated thirty thousand lives. The country's infrastructure and economy were both in shambles after this era. Despite this history, the people of Nicaragua have worked hard to move forward. Increasing stability in the past decade has improved the country's potential for economic opportunities and has prompted the country to promote tourism and increase employment opportunities for its people.

Honduras

Honduras has not experienced civil war, even though it is located amid three troubled neighbors. It is considered a

banana republic. American fruit companies have dominated this emerging country's economy and have supported the buildup of arms to ensure its stability. The term banana republic applies here only in how the region was dominated by foreign companies that grew bananas for export. Often the fruit companies would buy up large tracts of land and employ (for low wages) those displaced from the land to help grow the bananas. There have been incidences in history when US fruit companies involved themselves in Central American countries' political affairs to gain an economic advantage. Foreign fruit companies have monopolized the market in Central America to extract higher profits and control economic regulations. At present, international corporations have started to invest in Honduras to capitalize on the country's cheap labor pool and relatively stable economic and political conditions.

Costa Rica

If there is a bright spot in Central America, it is the democratic and peaceful Costa Rica, which does not have an army. The stable, democratically elected government and growing economy have earned the country the nickname the Switzerland of Central America. Multinational companies have been moving here to take advantage of stable economic conditions, low labor costs, and a supportive environment for their employees. The California-based Intel Corporation has a sizeable microchip-manufacturing site in Costa Rica,

contributing heavily to its economy. The tropical climate and stable economy of Costa Rica also attract US tourists and people looking for a place to live after retirement. Costa Rica has borrowed heavily to finance social programs, education, and infrastructure and relies on tourism, outside forces, and economic development to help pay the bills.

Belize

At the northern end of Central America is the former British colony of Belize, which gained independence in 1981. Belize borders the Caribbean Sea and has a hot, tropical type A climate. It is small in size—about the size of El Salvador—and in population, with only about three hundred thousand people. Belize's lingua franca is English, but Spanish is increasing in usage because of immigration. It has the longest coral reef in the Western Hemisphere and has been promoting ecotourism as a means of economic development to capitalize on this aspect. After hurricanes ravaged the coastal Belize City, the country shifted its capital forty-five miles inland to Belmopan as a protective measure. Belmopan is a small, centrally located city with only about ten thousand people. It is called a forward capital, a term used to describe a country's capital city moved to serve better or protect the country's interests.

Panama and the Panama Canal

During the 1880s, the region of Panama was part of South America and was controlled by colonial Colombia, which was formerly colonized by Spain. To travel from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, ships had to sail around South America's southern tip, which was time-consuming and challenging to negotiate in some places due to ocean currents.

France agreed with Colombia to purchase a strip of land in Panama ten miles wide and about fifty miles long to build a canal. The French had experience building the Suez Canal between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean and applied their Panama skills. However, the tropical climate and swampy terrain quickly defeated the French workers with malaria, yellow fever, and other tropical diseases.

There was an increasing need to shorten the shipping distance between California and New York. Before the United States took over the canal project after the French abandoned it, Panama was separated from Colombia in a brief civil war and declared independent in 1903.

Understanding the French had encountered the problems, the United States first sent civil engineers and medical professionals to Panama to drain the swamps and apply tons of chemicals such as the insecticide DDT to eradicate the mosquito population. These chemicals were later found to be

toxic to humans but worked well in eliminating the mosquito problem. The Panama Canal was finally completed by the United States and opened for business in 1914 after tremendous difficulties had been overcome.

Many workers were imported from the Caribbean to help build the canal, which changed the ethnic makeup of Panama's population. About 14 percent of Panama's population has West Indian ancestry, and many of the laborers were of African descent. The difference in ethnicity caused an early layering of society, with those from the Caribbean finding themselves at the lower socioeconomic scale.

The Panama Canal is a marvel of engineering. An interior waterway was dammed up to create the artificial Lake Gatún at eighty-five feet above sea level. This sizeable inland lake provides a freshwater channel extending most of the way across the Isthmus of Panama. Canal channels on each end of Lake Gatún connect it with the sea. Locks raise and lower ships from sea level to the canal's eighty-five-foot water level and the lake. Gravity provides freshwater from Lake Gatún to fill the locks that raise and lower ships. As ships travel through the locks, the freshwater is eventually emptied into the sea. Rainfall is critical to resupply the water in Lake Gatún to keep the water channel constant and keep the canal locks in operation. The canal channel has to be dredged periodically to keep it from silting in. In recent years, deforestation has reduced the number of trees around the lake, resulting in more

silt entering the lake bed. A program to replant trees has been implemented to secure the lake and restore the natural conditions.

Recently, the Panama Canal politics have become more of an issue than the canal's operation. In 1977, US president Jimmy Carter agreed with Panamanian president Omar Torrijos to return the canal to Panama's government. Under this agreement, both the Panama Canal Zone and the actual canal were returned to Panama by 1999. Many Americans opposed the return of the canal to Panama. President Ronald Reagan campaigned on this position. The United States had military installations in the Canal Zone and used it as a training ground for the Vietnam War and other military missions. The United States operated the School of the Americas (SOA) in the Canal Zone, which was a place to train counterinsurgents and military personnel from other countries. The SOA was moved to Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1984 and was renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) in 2001.

One of the early graduates of the SOA was a young Panamanian officer named Manuel Noriega, placed on the CIA payroll in 1967. He was a prominent figure, helping with the US war against Nicaragua and generally serving US interests in the region despite being a known drug dealer. In May 1989, Noriega was elected president of Panama and became less supportive of US interests in the region. In

December 1989, the United States invaded Panama and captured Noriega. He was sentenced to forty years in a US prison for drug trafficking and was held as a political prisoner. Even after Noriega's arrest, the United States was not allowed to retain the Canal Zone for military purposes, which was a significant reason for the US presence in Panama. The Panama Canal Zone was an excellent geographical location for US military operations because it provided an excellent base to monitor South America's military activity. US military planes could fly from US bases to Panama without refueling, and the planes could then fly out of Panama to monitor activity in South America.

One of President Carter's arguments for the canal's return to Panama was that after the US military had supported the war with Colombia to make Panama independent in 1903, there had been no proper authorization from the Panamanian people to cede the Canal Zone to the United States. International law ruled that the Canal Zone was still sovereign Panamanian territory. The US military claimed that remaining in the Canal Zone was to provide security for the canal.

The Canal Zone and the actual Panama Canal were returned to Panama in 2000. The question arises, does the small country of Panama, with only about three million people, have the resources to manage and maintain the canal operations? To assist in economic development, Panama has established a free-trade zone next to the canal to entice international commerce.

Initially established in 1948, the free-trade zone has become one of the largest of its kind in the world. Panama City has also become a hub of international banking with the dubious claim of being a main money-laundering center for Colombian drug money. Panama is striving to be a leading economic center for the region, which would advance economic globalization and trade for Panama.

8.6 THE CARIBBEAN

The regions of Middle America and South America, including the Caribbean, follow similar colonial patterns of invasion, dominance, and development by outside European powers. The Caribbean Basin is often divided into the Greater Antilles and the Lesser Antilles (the bigger islands and the smaller islands, respectively). The Greater Antilles includes the four large islands of Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico. The Lesser Antilles are in the eastern and southern regions. The Bahamas are technically in the Atlantic Ocean, not in the Caribbean Sea, but they are usually associated with the Caribbean region and are often affiliated with the Lesser Antilles. Middle America can be divided into two geographic areas according to occupational activities and colonial dynamics. The rimland includes the Caribbean islands and the Caribbean coastal areas of Central America, while the mainland includes Mexico and Central America's interior.

Many of the Caribbean islands experience the rain shadow effect. Jamaica has a twenty-inch difference in rainfall between the north and south sides of the island because most of the rain falls on the north side, where the prevailing winds hit the island. The Blue Mountains in the eastern part of the island

provide a rain shadow effect. Puerto Rico has a tropical rain forest on the northeastern part of the island, which receives a large amount of rainfall. The rain shadow effect creates semidesert conditions on the southwestern side of Puerto Rico because it receives little rainfall. Low elevation islands such as the Bahamas do not receive as much rain because they are not high enough to affect rain clouds' precipitation patterns.

European Colonialism in the Caribbean

The Spanish were not the only Europeans to take advantage of colonial expansion in the Caribbean: the English, French, Dutch, and other Europeans followed. Most European colonial countries were located on the west coast of Europe, which had a seafaring heritage. This included smaller countries such as Denmark, Sweden, and Belgium. The Caribbean Basin became an active region for European ships to enter and vie for each island's possession.

Many Caribbean islands changed hands several times before finally being secured as established colonies (see Table 5.1 "Historical Caribbean Colonizers"). The European colonizers' cultural traits were injected into the fabric of the islands they colonized; thus, the languages, religions, and economic activities of the colonized islands reflected those of the

European colonizers rather than those of the native people had inhabited the islands originally. The four central colonial powers in the Caribbean were the Spanish, English, Dutch, and French. Other countries that held possession of various islands at different times were Portugal, Sweden, and Denmark. The United States became a colonial power when they gained Cuba and Puerto Rico due to the Spanish-American War. The US Virgin Islands were purchased from Denmark in 1918. Sweden controlled the island of St. Barthelemy from 1784 to 1878 before trading it back to the French, who had been the original colonizer. Portugal originally colonized Barbados before abandoning it to the British.

Colonialism drastically altered the ethnic makeup of the Caribbean; Amerindians were virtually eliminated after the arrival of Africans, Europeans, and Asians. The current social hierarchy of the Caribbean can be illustrated by the pyramid-shaped graphic that was used to illustrate social hierarchy in Mexico. Those of European descent are at the top of the pyramid and control a higher percentage of wealth and power even though they are a minority. In the Caribbean, the middle class includes mulattos, or people with both African and European heritage, including managers, businesspeople, and professionals. In some countries, such as Haiti, the minority mulatto segment of the population makes up the power base and holds a political and economic advantage over the rest

of the country while the working poor at the bottom of the pyramid makes up most of the population. In the Caribbean, the lower economic class contains the highest percentage of people of African heritage.

Not only was colonialism the vehicle that brought many Africans to the Caribbean through the slave trade, but it also brought many people from Asia to the Caribbean. Once slavery became illegal, the colonial powers brought indentured laborers to the Caribbean from their Asian colonies. Cuba was the destination for over one hundred thousand Chinese workers so that Havana can claim the first Chinatown in the Western Hemisphere. Laborers from the British colonies of India and other parts of South Asia arrived by ship in various British colonies in the Caribbean. At present, about 40 percent of Trinidad's population can claim South Asian heritage, and many follow the Hindu faith.

The Greater Antilles

Cuba: A Rimland Experience

The largest island in the Greater Antilles is Cuba, which was transformed by colonialism, the transition to plantation agriculture, and a socialist revolution. Cuba's island country is slightly larger than the US state of Kentucky, but it has more than eleven million people, while Kentucky has just over

4.2 million. The elongated island has the Sierra Maestra mountains on its eastern end, the Escambray Mountains in the center, and the Western Karst region in the west, near Viñales. Low hills and fertile valleys cover more than half the island. The pristine waters of the Caribbean that surround the island make for some of the most attractive tourist locations in the Caribbean region.

It has been estimated that as many as one hundred thousand Amerindians inhabited Cuba when Christopher Columbus first landed on the island in 1492. Except for brief control by the British, the island was a Spanish colony until 1898. Plantation agriculture was established, and slaves provided the labor. History indicates that more than eight hundred thousand African slaves were brought to Cuba between 1800 and 1870. Slave labor was in high demand on the extensive sugar plantations that dominated the island's economy. The African influence can still be witnessed today in the main religion of the island, Santería, which is an overlay of African-based spirits on top of Catholic saints. At present, an estimated 70 percent of Cubans practice some aspect of Santería.

With Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War, the United States gained possession of the Spanish possessions of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippines, and various other islands and thus became a colonial power. Cuba technically became independent in 1902 but remained under US influence for decades. Sugar plantations and the sugar industry came to be

owned and operated by US interests, and wealthy Americans bought up large haciendas (large estates), farmland, and family estates, as well as industrial and business operations. Organized crime syndicates operated many of the nightclubs and casinos in Havana. As long as government leaders supported US interests, things went well with business as usual.

The Cuban Revolution

In January of 1934, with the US government's encouragement, Fulgencio Batista led a coup that took control of the Cuban government. Once a prisoner under Batista and having fled to Mexico in exile for several years, Fidel Castro returned to Cuba to start a revolution. Joining him were his brother Raúl Castro and revolutionaries such as Che Guevara, an Argentinean doctor turned comrade-in-arms. Starting in the remote and rugged Sierra Maestras in the east, Castro rallied the Cuban people's support. By the end of 1958, the Cuban Revolution brought down the US-backed Batista government. Castro gained power and had the support of most of the Cuban population.

Castro worked to recover Cuba for Cubans. The government cleared rampant gambling from the island, forcing organized crime operations to shut down or move back to the United States. Castro nationalized all foreign landholdings and the sugar plantations and all the utilities, port facilities, and other industries. Foreign ownership of land and businesses in Cuba

was forbidden. Large estates, once owned by wealthy US families, were taken over and recovered for Cuban purposes.

The United States Embargo Era

Castro's policy of seizing (nationalizing) businesses and property raised concerns in the United States. As a result, US President Dwight D. Eisenhower severed diplomatic relations with Cuba in 1960 and issued an executive order implementing a partial trade embargo to prohibit Cuban goods' importation. Later presidents implemented a full-scale embargo, restricting travel and trade with Cuba. In March 1960, the Central Intelligence Agency trained Cuban exiles to invade Cuba at the Bay of Pigs on the island's south side. This failed invasion attempt only consolidated the Cuban people's support for Castro and his socialist government.

To deter any further US plans of invading or destabilizing Cuba, Castro sought economic and military assistance from the Soviet Union. Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev agreed to secretly send missiles armed with nuclear weapons capable of hitting targets within the United States. In September 1962, US spy planes identified the missile sites. On October 22, 1962, President John F. Kennedy announced a naval blockade of the island and informed Khrushchev that any Soviet ship crossing the blockade would be sunk. At the last second, the two leaders resolved this dispute (called the Cuban Missile Crisis) before it erupted into a potential nuclear war.

Khrushchev recalled the ships and agreed to dismantle the Cuban missile sites. In return, the United States agreed not to invade Cuba and remove US missiles from Turkey's sites aimed at the Soviet Union.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 caused a downturn in Cuba's economy. With the loss of Soviet aid, the 1990s were a difficult time for Cubans, a period of transition. Castro turned to tourism and foreign investment to shore up his failing economy. Tensions between the United States and Cuba did not improve. In 1996, the United States strengthened the trade embargo with the Helms-Burton Act. At the turn of the twenty-first century, Cuba emerged as the lone Communist state in the Americas. Castro was the longest-governing leader of any country in the world. He never kept his promises of holding free elections; instead, he cracked down on dissent and suppressed free speech. He turned over power to his brother Raúl in 2006.

A Post-Castro Cuba

With Fidel Castro no longer in power, Cuba's future looks more positive but challenging. The island has natural resources, a great climate, and an excellent location but is also struggling economically. Cuba has a high literacy rate and has standardized health care, though medical supplies are often in short supply. The Cubans who live in dire poverty look to the future for relief. Personal freedoms have been marginal,

and reforms are slowly taking place in the post-Fidel era. As the largest island in the Caribbean, Cuba has the potential to become an economic power for the region. There is vast US interest in regaining US dominance of the Cuban economy, and corporate colonialists would like to exploit Cuba's economic potential. Keeping corporate colonialism out is what Fidel's socialist experiment worked so hard to achieve, even at the expense of depriving the Cuban people of civil rights and economic reforms.

Today, Cuba is transitioning from a socialist to a more capitalist economy and relies on outside sources for energy and food. In 2008, the average wage in Cuba was about twenty dollars per month. There was almost total employment, and everyone was on an equal footing concerning free health care, education, and housing. Simultaneously, the informal underground economy was thriving and was pushing the formal economy to make changes. That same year, Raúl Castro declared that workers with different skills and occupations could earn wages at varying levels. Cubans are now allowed to have cell phones and computers, though the Cuban government has restricted Internet access. More goods and money are being brought in from Cuban family members who live in the United States. The US government grants general licenses to allow several categories of people to travel to Cuba. It is only a matter of time before full travel restrictions are lifted.

Cuba is counting on tourism for an added economic boost. With some of the most beautiful beaches and the most transparent waters in the Caribbean, Cuba is a magnet for tourists and water sports enthusiasts. Its countryside is full of wonders and scenic areas. The beautiful Viñales Valley in western Cuba has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its outstanding karst landscape and traditional agriculture and its architecture, crafts, and music. Karst topography is made up of soluble rock, such as limestone, which in the Viñales Valley results in unusual bread loaf-shaped hills that create a scenic landscape attractive for tourism. This region is also one of Cuba's best tobacco-growing areas and has excellent potential for economic development. Cuba is gearing up for an increase in tourism when the United States lifts travel restrictions. There is already a focus on improving tourism services to people traveling there from China, Australia, Japan, and other countries. Millions more from the United States are expected to travel to Cuba once the travel restrictions are lifted. The Cuban economy is banking on tourism to forge a path to a more prosperous future.

The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

Populated for centuries by Amerindian peoples, the island of Puerto Rico was claimed by the Spanish Crown in 1493, following Columbus's second voyage to the Americas. In 1898, after four hundred years of colonial rule, during which

the indigenous population was nearly exterminated, and African slave labor was introduced, Puerto Rico was ceded to the United States due to the Spanish-American War. Puerto Ricans were granted US citizenship in 1917. Popularly elected governors have served since 1948. In 1952, a constitution was enacted, providing for internal self-government. In 1967, 1993, and 1998, Puerto Rican voters chose to retain the commonwealth status, although they were almost evenly split between total independence and becoming a US state.

Puerto Rico is the smallest of the Greater Antilles' four islands and is only slightly larger than the US state of Delaware. Puerto Rico's population is about four million, similar to the population of Kentucky or Oregon. As US citizens, Puerto Ricans have no travel or employment restrictions anywhere in the United States, and about one million Puerto Ricans live in New York City alone. The commonwealth arrangement allows Puerto Ricans to be US citizens without paying federal income taxes, but they cannot vote in US presidential elections. The Puerto Rican Federal Relations Act governs the island and awards it considerable autonomy.

Puerto Rico has one of the most dynamic economies in the Caribbean Basin; still, about 60 percent of its population lives below the poverty line. A diverse industrial sector has far surpassed agriculture as the primary area of economic activity. Encouraged by duty-free access to the United States and tax incentives, US firms have invested heavily in Puerto Rico since

the 1950s, even though US minimum wage laws apply. Sugar production has lost out to dairy production and other livestock products as the agricultural sector's primary income source. Tourism has traditionally been an essential income source, with estimated arrivals of more than five million tourists a year. San Juan is the number one port for cruise ships in the Caribbean outside Miami. The US government also subsidizes Puerto Rico's economy with financial aid.

The future of Puerto Rico as a political unit remains unclear. Some in Puerto Rico want total independence, and others would like to become the fifty-first US state; the commonwealth status is a compromise. Puerto Rico is not an independent country as a result of colonialism. Many of the islands and colonies in the Caribbean Basin have experienced dynamics similar to Puerto Rico in that they are still under the political jurisdiction of a country that colonized it.

Hispaniola: The Dominican Republic and Haiti

Sharing the island of Hispaniola are the two countries of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The island became a possession of Spain under European colonialism after Columbus visited it in 1492 and 1493. The Tiano-Arawak people were nonviolent and welcomed the Europeans, who, in turn, pressed them into servitude and slavery. French buccaneers settled on the western portion of Hispaniola and started growing tobacco and crops. France and Spain finally agreed to divide the island into two

colonies: the western side would be French, and the eastern side would be Spanish.

The Dominican Republic holds the largest share of Hispaniola. A former Spanish colony, the Dominican Republic has weathered the storms of history to become a relatively stable democratic country. It is not, of course, without its problems. The Dominican Republic has long been viewed primarily as an exporter of sugar, coffee, and tobacco, but the service sector has overtaken agriculture as the economy's largest employer in recent years. The mountainous interior and the coastal beaches are attractive to the tourism market, and tourism remains the primary source of economic income. The economy is highly dependent on the United States, which is the destination for nearly 60 percent of its exports. Remittances from workers in the United States sent back to their families on the island contribute much to the economy. The country suffers from marked income inequality; the poorest half of the population receives less than one-fifth of the gross domestic product (GDP), while the wealthiest 10 percent enjoys nearly 40 percent of GDP. High unemployment and underemployment remain a significant long-term challenge. The Central American-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) came into play in March 2007, boosting investment and exports and reducing losses to the Asian garment industry. Also, the global economic downturn has not helped the Dominican Republic.

Plantation agriculture thrived in Haiti during the colonial era, producing sugar, coffee, and other cash crops. The local labor pool was insufficient to expand plantation operations, so French colonists brought thousands of African slaves to work the plantations, and people of African descent soon outnumbered Europeans. Haiti became one of the most profitable French colonies globally, with some of the time's highest sugar production. A slave revolt that began in 1792 finally defeated the French forces, and Haiti became an independent country in 1804. It was the first country ever to be ruled by former slaves. However, the transition to a fully functional free state was difficult. Racked by corruption and political conflicts, few presidents ever served a full term in office in the first hundred years.

The United States occupied Haiti from 1915 to 1934 to instill a US presence and bring stability. From 1957 to 1986, Dr. François “Papa Doc” Duvalier and then his son Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier controlled the government. They created a private army and terrorist death squads known as Tonton Macoutes. Many Haitians fled to the United States or Canada, especially to French-speaking Quebec. After the Duvalier era, a Catholic priest named Jean-Bertrand Aristide won the presidency through democratic elections only to be deposed of by a military coup a few years later. Haiti has had a difficult time finding political and economic stability.

Haiti is the most impoverished nation in the Western

Hemisphere, and many Haitians live in dire poverty with few employment opportunities. An elite upper-class minority controls the bulk of the nation's wealth. Many people in Haiti have sought comfort in Voodoo (Vodoo), a religious practice steeped in African beliefs brought over with the slave trade. Often misunderstood by outsiders, Vodou is its primary objective to bring good health and well-being.

Haiti's January 12, 2010, earthquake was a significant setback for such an emerging country that was already in need of aid and support. The 7.0 magnitude earthquake, with many aftershocks, struck Haiti about fifteen miles from Port-Au-Prince, resulting in as many as two hundred thousand deaths. More than two million were immediately homeless, and about a million more needed aid. The lack of building standards in Haiti contributed to the collapse of structures and the devastation. Food and other aid were brought in by many international agencies and other countries to address the situation. Efforts continue to address the Haitian people's needs to stabilize the situation and provide support and future opportunities.

Jamaica

The tropical island of Jamaica is physically smaller than the US state of Connecticut. In 2010, it had a population of about 2.8 million. Jamaica was settled by the Spanish early in the sixteenth century. The Taino Indians, who had inhabited

Jamaica for centuries, were gradually eradicated and replaced by African slaves. When England seized the island from Spain in 1655, it established a plantation economy based on sugar, cocoa, and coffee. Two hundred years later (1834), the abolition of slavery freed a quarter million slaves, many of whom became small farmers. Jamaica gradually obtained independence from Britain, with full independence achieved in 1962. Sugar, cocoa, and coffee production continue on the island, of which more than half is mountainous. The Blue Mountains of eastern Jamaica are known for their Blue Mountain coffee production.

Deteriorating economic conditions during the 1970s led to recurrent violence as rival gangs affiliated with the major political parties evolved into powerful organized crime networks involved in international drug smuggling and money laundering. Violent crime, drug trafficking, and poverty pose significant challenges to the country. Nonetheless, many rural and resort compounds remain relatively safe and contribute substantially to the tourism sector. The beautiful beaches and lush interior make for an attractive destination for cruise ships and other tourists.

Tourism and Economic Activity in the Rimland

The physical geography of the Caribbean region makes it a prime location for tourism. Its beautiful coastal waters and warm tropical climate draw in tourists from all over North

America and the world. Tourism is the number one means of economic income for many places in the Caribbean Basin, and the tourist industry has experienced enormous growth in the last few decades. Tourism is a significant component of efforts by the Lesser Antilles islands' efforts to achieve economic development for their people. In the last decade, there has been substantial growth in the number of cruise ships operating in the Caribbean. Cruise ships from the southern coasts of the United States ply their trade around the islands and coastal regions. San Juan receives the largest number of cruise ship travelers, but other areas well known to tourists include the Bahamas, St. Martin, and the Virgin Islands. Even the poorest country in the Caribbean, Haiti, has tried to attract cruise ships to its ports. The western Caribbean itinerary includes the Cayman Islands, Jamaica, and Mexico, or Central American ports. The main restriction on cruise ship travel is the hurricane season, from June to November.

One might reasonably think that the economic benefits of tourism would be entirely positive. However, this is not necessarily the case. Even though tourism has become a vital economic component of the Caribbean Basin, tourism creates many problems in the long term. Large cruise ships and pleasure crafts can overtax the environment; there have been occasions where there were more tourists than citizens on an island. An increase in tourist activity brings with it an increase in environmental pollution.

Most people in the Caribbean Basin live below the poverty line, and the investment in tourism infrastructure, such as exclusive hotels and five-star resorts, takes away resources that could be allocated to schools, roads, medical clinics, and housing. However, without the income from tourism, there would be no money for infrastructure. Tourism attracts people who can afford to travel. Most jobs in hotels, ports, and restaurants where wealthy tourists visit employ people from more impoverished communities at low wages. The disparity between the rich tourist and the poor worker creates strong centrifugal cultural dynamics. The gap between the level of affluence and the level of poverty is extensive in the Caribbean. In the model of how countries gain wealth, tourism is a mixed-profit situation. Local businesses in the Caribbean gain income from tourists who spend their money there; however, big money is in the cruise ship lines and the resort hotels, mainly owned by international corporations or the local wealthy elite.

There is little activity in the Caribbean Basin in the manufacturing sector. Although US firms have invested in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic have experienced growth in light industries and information technologies, the remaining islands have real growth in western Cuba. Unless an island state has natural resources such as oil or minerals, as is the case with Trinidad and Tobago, there are few opportunities other than tourism to bolster the economy.

Agricultural products have been traditionally a large part of the economic activity of the islands of the Lesser Antilles. Grenada, for example, is known for its nutmeg and other spices. Bananas, sugar, and other fruit and food crops have also been exporting products. The problem has been that the products' profit margins are low, and prices are subject to international markets, which fluctuate widely. With an increasing population and few opportunities or advantages, Haiti suffers from poverty and unemployment. Being an island, there are few methods of expanding the economy. People often try to migrate to another country in search of employment and a more hopeful future.

Offshore Banking

Other methods of gaining wealth in the Caribbean include offshore banking and financial services. Various islands have established themselves as banking centers where one can set up financial accounts outside other countries' jurisdictions. These offshore accounts provide tax havens for individuals or corporations that wish to evade taxes in their home countries. Many of these island banking centers do not share account information with tax agencies or government offices of other countries. Places such as the Cayman Islands have a worldwide reputation for professional financial services for offshore banking. As a result, the Cayman Islands people have a high

standard of living with much national wealth. The Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos have also established offshore financial centers, and other Caribbean Islands are working to increase their visibility with similar services. All are hoping to gain income from this low-impact and high-income enterprise. The United States and other countries have made attempts to pressure these islands to share people's financial account information evading taxes. If successful, there may be less incentive for individuals and businesses to use offshore accounts to shelter income from taxes or those involved in illegal money-laundering schemes to hide money in the Caribbean.

The broad level of diversity in the Caribbean has not made it easy for outside entities to support common economic goals. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is an organization with fifteen Caribbean members established to promote economic integration and cooperation in the region. It hopes to coordinate foreign policy for the region and ensure that integration benefits are equitably shared. CARICOM attempts to compete with other trade organizations such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and CAFTA-DR.

Caribbean Music

The Caribbean culture includes many varieties of music that

have developed on several islands. The region is a breeding ground for innovative music and rhythms that emulate people's cultural traditions and attitudes. Every island has its traditional festivals that include parades, music, and dance. The music scene reveals the uniqueness of the Caribbean. Listening to the myriad of sounds generated from the different islands opens a window to the assortment of cultural backgrounds found in the Caribbean.

The Caribbean is full of local musical variations, and many types of music are found only on a single island or two. For example, the Dominican Republic has meringue music, Dominica has bouyon, and Haiti has its rare festive music.

The Cuban influence on music is vividly evident in the spicy salsa tunes that have emanated from the Caribbean over the years. African and Spanish cultural influences have helped shape the salsa music that has evolved from Cuba and neighboring islands of Puerto Rico and the Greater Antilles. With a strong percussion component, snappy brass additions, and rhythmic guitar sections, salsa has become popular throughout Latin America. Other music genres coming out of Cuba include rumba, habanera, son, and timba, to name a few.

Calypso music comes from a mix of African influences on the island of Trinidad. Calypso began taking shape at the beginning of the twentieth century and gained popularity through Carnival and other Caribbean festivals. It has evolved

to incorporate the steel pan and other musical instruments. A commercial version of calypso became popular with Harry Belafonte's version of the Jamaican folk tune of "Day-O," known as the "Banana Boat Song"; however, Belafonte's 1956 album *Calypso* had more of a Jamaican mento musical style, and he was not from Trinidad. Mento is a more folksy rural style of acoustic music that influenced other forms of music, such as reggae in Jamaica.

The pan (steel pan) is Trinidad and Tobago's national instrument, where it was created. The pan was initially made from fifty-five-gallon oil drums. The bottom is cut off at various levels to provide different sounds, while the top is shaped into a chromatically pitched percussion instrument. It is struck with a pair of straight sticks. An entire family of pans has been developed and can be assembled into a steel pan orchestra. The instrument has become popular outside the Caribbean as well.

Reggae music started coming out of Jamaica in the 1960s with such artists as Bob Marley and the Wailers, which featured Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer. The rhythmic style with offbeat accents evolved from earlier genres to become a standard of Jamaican music. Musicians from the Beatles to Eric Clapton have used reggae rhythms. Outside Jamaica, reggae has hit the charts thanks to groups such as UB40. Reggae music has often been associated with the Rastafarian movement, or Rasta, which is based on a religious ideology, including the beliefs

that former Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie was God incarnate and the biblical Zion, was in Africa.

8.7 SUMMARY

The Caribbean, Mexico, and Central America make up the realm of Middle America. Two types of development patterns emerged with European colonialism. The rimland, with its plantation agriculture, dominated the Caribbean and coastal regions. The mainland, with its haciendas, dominated Mexico and interior regions of Central America.

European colonialism decimated the Amerindian population of the Caribbean and conquered the Aztec Empire of the mainland. Colonialism altered the food production, building methods, urbanization, language, and religion of the realm.

African slave labor became prominent in the Caribbean and altered the ethnic makeup of most islands. Amerindians make up most of the lower working class on the mainland. A minority of wealthy Europeans continue to be at the top of the socio-economic class structure. Most of Mexico's population is of mestizo heritage.

Mexico has transitioned from a Spanish colony to a partner in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Trade relations have helped industrialize Mexico's economy and provide employment, especially in maquiladoras that thrive in

Mexico. Mexico has many natural resources but still struggles to provide economic opportunities for its entire population. An elite minority controls wealth and power with a European heritage.

Various geographic concepts and principles can be applied to this realm: rural-to-urban shift, core-periphery spatial relationship, altitudinal zonation, and the impact of climate types on human habitation.

Population growth and the lack of employment opportunities have contributed to the high poverty levels in many areas. There is a wide disparity between the income levels of the wealthy and the poor. Haiti, for example, is one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere.

The United States has had a significant impact on this region, both politically and economically. The US military has intervened in many places to control their interests, and US companies have dominated the region's economies. Most recently, the United States has supported industrial activities and the implementation of free-trade agreements to take advantage of cheap labor.

Earthquakes, volcanoes, and hurricanes continue to bring devastation and destruction to human activity in Middle America. Other environmental issues, such as deforestation and soil degradation, have also become serious problems.

Central America is a diverse and fragmented realm with every country, island, or republic possessing different geography. The varied styles of music that have emerged from the region provide an excellent example of cultural diversity.

Tourism is an important economic sector that has mixed impacts on the local situation. Every part of the Middle American realm has sought to improve its tourism draw to bolster its economy.

The global economy has prompted the region's political entities to work more closely to advance their economic interests. Trade associations such as NAFTA, the Central American-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR), and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) attempt to develop a higher economic integration level. Some argue that multinational corporations stand to benefit the most from free-trade agreements.

Tropical cyclones are storms that occur in the tropical regions over warm ocean water. In the North Atlantic, when wind speeds reach seventy-four miles per hour, they are called hurricanes. Hurricane season is between June 1 and November 30, and cruise ships do not usually operate in the Caribbean during this time. High winds and storm surges have caused severe flooding and damage to the human landscape.

8.8 ATTRIBUTIONS AND REFERENCES

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PART IX

NORTH AMERICA

9.1 IDENTIFYING THE REGION



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As a continent, North America’s realm extends from the Arctic polar regions in northern Canada and Alaska south through Mexico and Central America. Geographers usually study the continent by dividing it into two separate realms based on physical and cultural geography differences. Both the United States and Canada share similar physical geography characteristics and common development history with either a British or French colonial legacy. Mexico and Central America are dominated by more tropical climates and were

colonized mainly by the Spanish. The United States and Canada, the second- and third-largest countries in the world in physical area, respectively, make up more than 13 percent of the world's total landmass.

The Atlantic Ocean borders its eastern edge, and the Pacific Ocean creates its western boundary. To the north is the Arctic Ocean. The North American region is highly urbanized, with roughly 80 percent of the population lives in cities. However, other vast areas, especially in Canada, are sparsely populated. Although some natives remain, most of North America's diverse population consists of immigrants or descendants of immigrants from other world regions. The United States is the world's largest economy, and both countries enjoy high living standards as technologically developed countries.

Click the “Next” button on the lower-right to advance to the next section of the chapter.

9.2 PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE REGION

Physical Landscape

North America is divided into several physical regions with distinct landforms. The western part of the continent is marked by north-south mountain ranges in the Rocky Mountains and Pacific Mountains and Valleys physiographic provinces, with the Intermontane Basins and Plateaus in between. The eastern portion of North America is defined by the ancient Appalachian Highlands, a mountain range much less rugged than the Rockies but with no less influence on the United States' history and development. The interior of the continent is characterized by plains, the Interior Lowlands, and the Great Plains. To the north is the Canadian Shield, geologically the oldest part of North America, and a sparsely populated area with poor soils. At the southern and eastern edge of the continent is the Gulf-Atlantic Coastal Plain, a relatively flat zone that extends from New York to Texas.

Traditionally, North America's continent extends from the Canadian Arctic through the United States and Mexico to

Panama's narrow Isthmus. When considering the "region" of North America, however, the area united by common physical and cultural characteristics, there are distinct similarities between Canada and the United States in terms of language and a shared history that are quite different from their Spanish-speaking neighbors to the south. Although the narrow strip of land that typically divides North and South America makes for an easy way to divide these two regions, in many ways, Middle America is mostly a transition zone between more powerful economies to the north and south.

The physiographic regions of North America are well-defined and are commonly recognized by its residents. Someone might say he is from "Appalachia," for example, or that she grew up in the "Rocky Mountains." In general, the physiographic regions have a strong north-south alignment. Climatically, the region is quite diverse, ranging from tundra in northern Canada and Greenland to semiarid desert in the southwestern United States. These diverse physical conditions have enabled North America to have a wide variety of natural resources and contributed to significant regional differences.

Climate and Biomes

As with the physical landscape, the climate zones of North America are diverse. In general, North America has a relatively simple weather system. As you increase in latitude north, the

temperature decreases, and as you travel west to east, the precipitation increases. Thus, California is relatively warm and dry on the west coast, while Florida on the east coast is hot and wet.

The climates of the United States and Canada include the frigid type E climate of the tundra of northern Canada and Alaska, the tropical type A climate of southern Florida and Hawaii, the type C climates of the humid eastern United States, the seasonal type D climates of the northern United States and most of Canada, and the arid type B climates of the Southwest and Great Plains. In general, there are two different climate patterns common in North America. The first pattern is that temperatures get warmer from north and south towards the equator. The second pattern is a decrease in precipitation as you move from east to west across the continent until you reach the Pacific Coast, where rainfall is abundant again.

The second climate pattern is created by the rain shadow effect of the western mountain ranges. As wet air masses move from the Pacific Ocean over the North American continent, they run into the Cascades and the Sierra Nevada. The Cascade ranges of Washington State and Oregon cut off moisture from falling on the mountains' leeward side; thus, eastern Washington State and eastern Oregon are semiarid. The western United States experiences a strong rain shadow effect. As the air rises to pass the mountains, water vapor condenses and is released as rain and snow. This means that there is much more precipitation west of these mountain

ranges than to their east, resulting in arid and semiarid lands. The entire Great Plains of the western United States are affected by the rain shadow effect and have a semiarid type B climate.

The giant redwoods that stretch over California's Redwood National Park are the tallest trees on Earth, towering to over 100 meters (328 feet). These trees are also ancient. One such tree, known as "General Sherman," is the largest in the world by volume and is believed to be over 2,000 years old. When General Sherman first emerged from the ground, North America was settled by several indigenous groups. It would be 1,000 more years until Europeans would make contact with the Americas. Today, though many redwoods remain, North America's physical and human landscape has profoundly changed.

Most of Canada's land area consists of the boreal forest, known as taiga in Russia. This boreal forest area consists of coniferous trees, such as spruce and pine, and is characterized by a cold climate. For Canada's indigenous communities, in particular, this vast stretch of woodland has been a valuable resource. The Canadian Shield's rocky landscape extends from the Arctic regions of Central Canada west through Quebec and is among the oldest geologic formations on Earth. It also has some of the world's most abundant mineral areas.

Geology

Most of North America, including Mexico, Greenland, and some of the Caribbean, is situated on the North American plate and is relatively geologically stable. However, one notable exception is the Juan de Fuca Plate, which is subducting under the North American plate near California and Vancouver Island, an area known as the Cascadia subduction zone. Severe earthquakes, generating tsunamis, have occurred here roughly every 500 years; the last major earthquake in the area was 1700 CE. Just to the south, the San Andreas Fault running along the edge of California forms the boundary between the Pacific Plate and the North American Plate. This is a transform plate boundary, with the two plates sliding past each other horizontally. San Francisco is located on this fault line, and the area has experienced numerous earthquakes.

Hydrology

North America has several significant rivers, some of which are used for shipping and others for hydroelectric power. The longest North American river is the Missouri, which forms in Montana and flows into the Mississippi River. The Mississippi River is primarily considered to be the most crucial waterway in terms of commercial transportation. The Port of South

Louisiana, located along the Mississippi, is the largest in the United States in tonnage.

Below North America lies several aquifers or underground layers of permeable rock that hold groundwater. The largest of these aquifers is the Ogallala Aquifer, located in the central United States, stretching from South Dakota to Texas. This aquifer supplies water to much of the Great Plains; it supplies about one-third of all groundwater used for irrigation in the United States. While aquifers are beneficial for irrigation, they replenish their water supplies relatively slowly through rainfall. The depletion of the Ogallala Aquifer has accelerated over the past few decades. Currently, water is being taken out of the aquifer faster than it can be replaced. Once all of the water is depleted, it will take around 6,000 years to replenish naturally. Groundwater conservation initiatives in the area have aimed to slow the depletion rate by encouraging farmers to practice sustainable irrigation methods.

While farmers have been encouraged to conserve water, groundwater depletion is just one of the many environmental concerns facing North America's farmers. Sustainable agriculture, more broadly, remains an important initiative. This type of agriculture looks at farming's effect on the broader ecosystem and seeks to produce agriculture that does not negatively impact the long-term ecosystem. It is essentially farming that can be sustained and seeks to minimize water use, soil erosion, and harmful chemicals. Globally, over one-third of all agricultural land has become degraded due to poor

land and resource management. Soil is a finite resource, and topsoil can take over 500 years to form. Traditional forms of agriculture of vast tilled land can often lead to topsoil erosion. Through sustainable agricultural practices, soil erosion rates have slowed in the United States over several decades.

Environmental Issues

Environmental Pollution

Many environmental problems like topsoil erosion and groundwater depletion affect a wide area and can have far-reaching effects beyond areas where the environment is not being sensitively managed. For example, acid rain formed from sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions can have damaging effects far beyond the areas that are emitting these gases. When cars or factories burn fossil fuels, those nonrenewable sources of energy formed by the remains of decayed plants or animals release several chemicals, including sulfur and nitrogen. These gases react with water in the atmosphere to form a highly acidic rain that can damage plants and animals. The lower the pH value, the more acidic a substance is; pure water has a pH of 7. Acid rain can have a pH of around 5.0, or even below 4.0 in some areas. By comparison, Pickles have a pH of around 5.20, so imagine the devastating effects of this acidic precipitation on the environment. The strict regulation of

fossil fuel emissions since the 1970s has dramatically reduced instances of acid rain in the United States. Still, some argue that further regulation is needed to address global climate changes and other pollution concerns.

Anthropogenic Climate Change

More importantly, acid rain is the causes and potential consequences of anthropogenic climate change across North America. In 2017, the United States produced a scientific report titled Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume I. Within that report, it focused on how climate will impact temperatures, water resources, sea-level rise, and other natural systems across the nation. More specifically, the report highlighted:

- Global and US temperatures continue to rise
- Temperature and precipitation extremes are becoming more common
- Oceans are rising, warming, and becoming more acidic
- Climate change in Alaska and across the Arctic continues to outpace global climate change
- Limiting global warming to 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) will require significant reductions in fossil fuel emissions
- There is a significant possibility for unanticipated changes

In 2018, the US government released the next volume of the Fourth National Climate Assessment, titled Volume II: Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States. Within that report, it highlights:

- **Communities:** Climate change creates new risks and exacerbates existing vulnerabilities in communities across the United States, presenting growing challenges to human health and safety, quality of life, and the rate of economic growth.
- **Economy:** Without substantial and sustained global mitigation and regional adaptation efforts, climate change is expected to cause growing losses to American infrastructure and property and impede the rate of economic growth over this century.
- **Interconnected Impacts:** Climate change affects the natural, built, and social systems we rely on individually and through their connections to one another. These interconnected systems are increasingly vulnerable to cascading impacts that are often difficult to predict, threatening essential services within and beyond the Nation's borders.
- **Actions to Reduce Risks:** Communities, governments, and businesses reduce the risks and costs associated with climate change by taking action to lower greenhouse gas emissions and implement adaptation strategies. While mitigation and adaptation efforts have

expanded substantially in the last four years, they do not yet approach the scale considered necessary to avoid substantial damages to the economy, environment, and human health over the coming decades.

- **Water:** The quality and quantity of water available for use by people and ecosystems across the country are being affected by climate change, increasing risks and costs to agriculture, energy production, industry, recreation, and the environment.
- **Health:** Impacts from climate change on extreme weather and climate-related events, air quality, and the transmission of disease through insects and pests, food, and water increasingly threaten the health and well-being of the American people, particularly populations that are already vulnerable.
- **Indigenous Peoples:** Climate change increasingly threatens Indigenous communities' livelihoods, economies, health, and cultural identities by disrupting interconnected social, physical, and ecological systems.
- **Ecosystems and Services:** Ecosystems and the benefits they provide to society are being altered by climate change, and these impacts are projected to continue. Without substantial and sustained reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions, some ecosystems' transformative impacts will occur; some coral reefs and sea ice ecosystems are already experiencing such transformational changes.

- **Agriculture:** Rising temperatures, extreme heat, drought, wildfire on rangelands, and heavy downpours are expected to disrupt agricultural productivity in the United States increasingly. Expected increases in livestock health challenges, declines in crop yields and quality, and changes in extreme events in the United States and abroad threaten rural livelihoods, sustainable food security, and price stability.
- **Infrastructure:** Our Nation's aging and deteriorating infrastructure are further stressed by increases in heavy precipitation events, coastal flooding, heat, wildfires, and other extreme events, as well as changes to average precipitation and temperature. Without adaptation, climate change will continue to degrade infrastructure performance over the rest of the century, with the potential for cascading impacts that threaten our economy, national security, essential services, and health and well-being.
- **Oceans and Coasts:** The impacts of climate change increasingly threaten coastal communities and the ecosystems that support them. Without significant reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions and regional adaptation measures, many coastal regions will be transformed by the latter part of this century, impacting other regions and sectors. Even in a future with lower greenhouse gas emissions, many communities are expected to suffer financial impacts as chronic high-

tide flooding leads to higher costs and lower property values.

- **Tourism and Recreation:** Outdoor recreation, tourist economies, and quality of life are reliant on benefits provided by our natural environment that will be degraded by the impacts of climate change in many ways.

9.3 HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE REGION

History of the Region

Although Christopher Columbus is often credited with “discovering” America, it is critical to understand that the landmass was inhabited long before Europeans made contact. With many areas having complex cultures and civilizations. Early migrants to the Americas most likely traveled from Asia through the Beringia land bridge that once connected Siberia and Alaska over 10,000 years ago. These indigenous peoples, known as First Nations in Canada or Native Americans in the United States, were divided into several different groups, consisting only of a few small families and others encompassing vast territories and empires. Some groups practiced hunting and gathering, but many practiced settled agriculture. Before European contact, an estimated 50 million indigenous people were living in North and South America.

European colonization completely changed the cultural landscape of North America. In 1492 CE, Columbus made

contact with what are now the Bahamas, Cuba, and the island of Hispaniola, spurring Spanish and Portuguese colonization of the Americas. The term “Indian” was initially used by Columbus, who thought he had arrived in the East Indies, referred to as East and Southeast Asia. Early French and English settlements were not successful, but they too gained control of territory and founded permanent colonies over time. The easternmost indigenous groups were the first to experience the impacts of European invasion. Many were relocated, often forcibly, to North America’s interior to free up land for European settlement. Disease and war would have a devastating effect on the indigenous groups of the Americas. European settlers and explorers brought smallpox, measles, and cholera – diseases previously unknown to North America. In some areas, 90 percent of the indigenous population died.

In 1619, the first twenty African slaves were brought to an English colony in Virginia. Over the next 400 years, nearly every aspect of American history would be influenced by slavery. In August 2019, the New York Times recently released The 1619 Project, intending to bring to light the original slaves brought the new Americas and the dark 400 years into the future it brought to the region as a new nation was founded on the backs of slavery.

By the early 1700s, France, the United Kingdom, and Spain had established formal colonies in the Americas, and the population geography of North America today is primarily

rooted in the colonial developments during this period. The British primarily set up settlements along the coast, including the thirteen colonies that would declare independence from the United Kingdom and form the United States basis. The French colonized much of Canada and the area surrounding the Mississippi River. Their primary objective was fur trading, and they founded a fur-trading outpost at what would later become the city of Quebec. The Spanish colonized present-day Florida and much of Middle America, stretching into the southwestern United States. They sought resources like gold, the expansion of trade, and opportunities to spread the Roman Catholic faith to indigenous groups.

The early British colonies had highly specialized economies, not unlike the patterns seen in present-day North America. The New England colonies, around the Massachusetts Bay area, were centers of commerce. The Chesapeake Bay area of Virginia and Maryland had many tobacco plantations. Around New York, New Jersey, and eastern Pennsylvania, several small, independent-farmer colonies were in the Middle Atlantic. Further south, the Carolinas were home to vast plantations cultivating crops like cotton.

These massive plantations relied on slave labor, a dark legacy that would last for 250 years in North America. Initially, colonists partnered with indentured servants. These laborers paid to their passage to North America by agreeing to work for an employer under contract for a set number of years. These

indentured servants often worked on farms, and once their contract expired, they were free to work on their own. Over half of all European immigrants to the Americas before the American Revolution were indentured servants.

As indentured servants gradually earned their freedom, the system of indentured servitude was replaced with slavery. The Portuguese were the first to bring slaves from Africa to the Americas during the 1500s. England, France, Portugal, and the Netherlands would all later join in the transatlantic slave trade, with England dominating the slave trade by the late 17th century. The vast majority of slaves were destined for sugar colonies in the Caribbean and Brazil. Less than 10 percent would be brought to the North American colonies, but this number still represented hundreds of thousands of people. It is estimated that a total of 12.5 million Africans were shipped to the New World as slaves.

During British colonization, slaves worked as house servants or laborers in the northern colonies and farmworkers in the south. Britain formally abolished slavery in 1833, but slavery was so entrenched in the economies of the southern United States that it would take a civil war to end the practice. In their secession statement, Mississippi explained its reasoning for leaving the union: “In the momentous step which our State has taken of dissolving its connection with the government of which we so long formed a part, it is but just that we should declare the prominent reasons which have induced our course.

Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery – the greatest material interest of the world. Its labor supplies the product which constitutes by far the largest and most important portions of commerce of the earth.”

When we think about the Civil War, it is essential to understand the geographical differences between the north and south and remember that the northern states profited from slavery in the south. Just as geographers can divide the world into core and peripheral countries today, the early United States can similarly be analyzed in terms of its core and periphery. The southern states were indeed peripheral in terms of their economic development. Slavery provided the southern states with the maximum profit for their commodities and the notion of “othering,” the idea that people who look different from you are definitively not you, combined to create an institution deeply a part of the southern culture and economy. Even after slavery was abolished in the United States in 1865 with the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, the legacy of slavery and the tendency to consider African Americans as “other” remained. It would be another 100 years before laws were passed in the United States that would bar discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Even still, racial and ethnic prejudices continue to be a significant social issue.

The Europeans, mainly the Spanish, French, and British, left a strong imprint on their North American colonies. The oldest

colonial city in North America is St. Augustine, Florida (1565), founded by Spain when Florida was a remote portion of the Spanish Americas. Spain also had outposts in what are now California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. The forms of settlement characteristic of those areas were similar to the Spanish colonies of Central America. While Spain governed what is now the southern United States, France ruled Canada and much of the North American continent's interior. The French first came to Canada in the late 1500s to engage in fishing in the North Atlantic and soon expanded their reach by creating a fur trade in the area surrounding the Great Lakes and throughout the Mississippi River system.

Although there were fewer settlers from France than from other European countries, especially in what became the United States, this French era left behind place names (Baton Rouge and Detroit), patterns of land use, and a French-speaking population in Canada. Despite the early influence of Spain and France in North America, most North Americans speak English as their native language due to Britain's colonial dominance in the United States and Canada. The earliest permanent British colony, Jamestown, was founded in 1607 in what became Virginia. The British built up a prosperous empire in the New World. Their thirteen American colonies became populous, economically robust, and militarily strong enough to gain independence in 1776. Canada functions as

an independent country but remains part of the British Commonwealth.

Early Development and Globalization of the United States

With abundant resources and opportunity, the original thirteen colonies prospered and expanded into what became the fifty US states. This nation's political geography was a product of various treaties and acquisitions that eventually extended from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. Fueling the expansion was the concept of Manifest Destiny: the belief of some Americans that the new nation was divinely predestined to expand across the continent. The United States negotiated with France for the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, acquiring millions of acres in the central United States. Florida was acquired from Spain in 1819, and Texas was annexed in 1845. The British sold portions of the Pacific Northwest to the United States and the exact northern boundary between the United States and Canada was settled in 1846. Through conflicts with Mexico, large portions of the West were ceded to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. Alaska was purchased from the Russians in 1867 for only \$7.2 million. Alaska and Hawaii were the last two possessions to enter into statehood, which they did in 1959.

Manifest Destiny

The concept of Manifest Destiny came from the works of John O’Sullivan in 1839. O’Sullivan wrote,

“The far-reaching, the boundless future will be the era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and time, many nations’ nation is determined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles; to establish on earth the noblest temple ever dedicated to the worship of the Most High – the Sacred and the True. Its floor shall be a hemisphere – its roof the firmament of the star-studded heavens, and its congregation a Union of many Republics, comprising hundreds of happy millions, calling, owning no man master, but governed by God’s natural and moral law of equality, the law of brotherhood – of “peace and goodwill among men.”

As the United States developed, it acquired external colonial possessions. With the victory over Spain in the Spanish-American War of 1898, the US government gained control of the Philippines, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and various Pacific islands. Cuba and the Philippines later became independent countries, but Puerto Rico and Guam continue to be part of the United States. The US Virgin Islands were purchased from Denmark in 1918 after World War I to provide strategic military support to protect the shipping lanes through the Caribbean and the Panama Canal.

Westward Settlement Patterns and European Immigration

The thirteen original colonies are often grouped into three regions, each with its own economic and cultural patterns. These three areas, New England, the Mid-Atlantic, and the South, are considered culture hearths, or places where culture formed and from which it spread. The three regions were source areas for westward migration, and migrants from these regions carried with them the cultural traditions of their culture hearths. New England was characterized by poor soils, subsistence agriculture, and fishing communities and was the birthplace of North America's Industrial Revolution. Its largest city was Boston. Settlers from New England traveled west across New York State and into the upper Midwest and the Great Lakes region. The Mid-Atlantic region, focused on Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was known for its fertile soils, prosperous small-scale agriculture, and a multinational population. Prosperous farming led to a vibrant economy and a robust network of towns and cities. People who wanted to migrate west from this region traveled down the Great Valley into the Appalachian Mountains and across the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky, or they crossed Pennsylvania and traveled west via the Ohio River valley. The heart of the South was Virginia, a region oriented around plantation agriculture. The South was overwhelmingly rural, and in time the bulk of its

agricultural workforce consisted of slaves brought to the United States from Subsaharan Africa.

Westward migration was spurred along by the gold boom in California (1849) and by the completion of the transcontinental railroad (1869). The settlement frontier pushed westward during the nineteenth century and was declared “closed” by the Bureau of the Census in 1890. This did not mean that settlers were spread uniformly across the continent by 1890; indeed, vast areas of the Great Plains and the mountain west remained sparsely populated by Europeans. The Homestead Act of 1862 also encouraged westward migration by offering 160 acres of free land to households willing to move west. The continental United States had been organized into official states by the end of the nineteenth century, except Oklahoma (1907), Arizona (1912), and New Mexico (1912).

Most US residents at its founding in 1776 had roots in Great Britain, with large numbers from other northern and western European countries and many others from Africa (most of whom were slaves in the South). During the nineteenth century, migrants continued to immigrate to the United States as its economy grew, especially after the 1830s. Germans and Irish began arriving in large numbers, joining others from Britain and other countries, predominantly Western Europe. As the century progressed, others from southern and eastern Europe, from Italy, Russia, and Austria, became the most

significant stream of immigrants to the United States. The new arrivals were different from the early British immigrants: they practiced Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox Christianity (not Protestantism), they primarily moved to urban areas, and they found work in the new manufacturing sector growing rapidly in the Northeast and around the Great Lakes. Very few immigrants came from Latin America or Asia at that time.

Industrial Development

As the Industrial Revolution began in the United Kingdom in the mid-1700s and spread across Europe, the United States was still primarily based on agriculture and natural resource production. Thus, some of the industry's early innovations were based on these raw resources, such as the cotton mill and textile factories. Hydropower was the critical energy source for these early manufacturing plants, and thus they were located almost exclusively in the northeastern United States, the only area with fast-moving rivers. After the Civil War in the 1860s, steam power manufacturing spread through the United States, allowing the southern states to industrialize. The manufacturing core region, called the Manufacturing Belt, had high concentrations of industrial output. Eventually, as the United States continued to industrialize, they overtook the United Kingdom by the early 20th century as the industry's global leader.

The geography of North America shaped industrial development and regional specializations. For example, in the Pittsburgh-Lake Erie region, abundant deposits of iron fueled steel manufacturing, inspiring Pittsburgh's professional football team's name. In the south, textile manufacturing developed and remains a regional specialty in many areas still today. Coal from Appalachia fueled industrial development in the Mid-Atlantic States. These regional specializations, and the fact that the southern states continued to rely on agricultural production for some time, further exacerbated economic differences between the north and south. Manufacturing took place in the cities and towns of the Manufacturing Belt. Not until the second half of the twentieth century did manufacturing move to rural areas; it was almost entirely an urban activity until then. As the United States went through its Industrial Revolution, its population shifted from almost entirely rural to urban. In 1790, only about 5 percent of the US population lived in urban areas; by 1920, about 50 percent lived in cities. As the rural to urban shift took place, the function and form of US cities also changed.

The Industrial Revolution shaped the pattern of human settlement in North America. As in Europe, industrial development occurred in urban areas spurring people to move from rural farming communities to the cities to find work. In 1790, around 5 percent of the US population lived in urban areas. At the end of the Civil War, as industrialization began

to diffuse across the continent, around 20 percent lived in cities. The invention of the electric streetcar (1888) allowed cities to increase in size. People could live farther from their employment place as long as they lived within walking distance of a streetcar line. Streetcar suburbs grew up along streetcar lines, and these neighborhoods were often segregated by ethnicity and race. Fewer people lived in downtowns, which became dedicated to retail and manufacturing. Cities remained oriented around a central business district (CBD), often located near the railway station. Factories needed to be near modes of transportation for both shipping in parts and shipping out completed products and so that workers could quickly get to work. By 1920, more people lived in cities than in rural areas. Today, over 80 percent of people in the US live in cities.

Large numbers of middle-class Americans began acquiring automobiles after about 1920; this eventually led to a complete rethinking of the city's spatial layout. Automobile suburbs sprang up outside the traditional city limits as people could buy homes far from streetcar lines or railway stations. Cities became increasingly decentralized:

- People could go shopping in suburban malls instead of downtown department stores.
- Factories could spring up at highway interchanges and not only near rivers and the railroad.
- People could live in one suburb and work in another

instead of living in the suburbs and working downtown.

Neighborhoods became even more racially and economically segregated than they had in the past as middle-class whites moved into the new automobile suburbs and left the more impoverished African Americans behind in the cities.

By the late twentieth century, the automobile had led to a new urban form called edge cities. Edge cities are areas of dense urban development outside the boundaries of the traditional city. They often form at the intersection of major interstate highways and contain shopping malls, office complexes, high-rise apartment buildings, industrial parks, restaurants, and hotels. Sometimes edge cities are called suburban downtowns. Edge cities have supplanted the CBD as the destination of choice for Americans, whether they are heading to work or to play.

Industrial development spurred large-scale migration, particularly from the peripheral regions of Eastern Europe, as people moved to the US to find work. Between 1865 and 1918, 27.5 million people migrated to the US. Conditions for many of these workers were dismal, and child labor would not end until 1930. Asians primarily migrated to the western United States, where they were often met with strong anti-immigrant sentiment. The legislation limited immigration from China and Japan at the turn of the 20th century. Improvements in rail

transportation further diffused both industrial development and the population of workers.

For the past several decades, manufacturing has been declining in the United States as people have shifted to jobs in service industries, like retail and finance. Still, the US remains the world's second-largest manufacturer behind China. This process is referred to as deindustrialization and is accompanied by social and economic changes as a country shifts from heavy industry to a more service-oriented economy.

Inequity in North America

While both Canada and the United States have relatively strong economies, income inequality persists. In the United States, in particular, around 12 percent of people live below the poverty line. However, some argue that the traditional definition of “living below the poverty line” has not kept up with rising living costs and inflation and that the actual percentage of Americans living in or near poverty is far higher. This income inequality is geographical, with the states in the south having significantly higher concentrations of people in poverty than the rest of the country. These regional differences are connected to historical differences in development. Just as the northern areas were the first to industrialize, they were the first to transition to more higher-income service industries. Although areas like Silicon Valley in California and the Austin-

San Antonio region of Texas have had an influx of high-tech industries, some south areas have been slow to transition from primarily agricultural and natural resource-based economies.

Canada's poverty rate is lower than the United States at around 10 percent. In general, Canada has more robust social welfare programs than the US. All Canada provinces provide universal, publicly funded healthcare, for example, and a monthly income is provided to those in extreme poverty.

However, in both the United States and Canada, income inequality is closely tied to ethnicity and race. For Canada's First Nations, poverty and homelessness rates are much higher than the national average, with half of all indigenous children in Canada live in poverty. In some areas, like Manitoba and Saskatchewan, the number is over 60 percent. In the US, the poverty rate among non-Hispanic whites was just over 10 percent in 2014. For black Americans, the poverty rate was 26 percent. By some measures, the US has the highest degree of income inequality among the world's advanced economies. In Canada, the richest 10 percent own 57.4 percent of the country's wealth. In the United States, the wealthiest 10 percent own over 75 percent of the country's wealth, the highest of the world's twenty most developed countries.

Globalization and Americanism

North America continues to have a significant role in global trade and influence. Both Canada and the United States are members of the Group of Eight (G8), a political forum of the world's leading industrialized countries that also includes France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the European Union. Both are also members of the World Trade Organization (WTO), an intergovernmental organization that collectively regulates international trade.

Within North America, trade has been governed under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Canada, Mexico, and the United States. This agreement was established in 1994 to increase economic cooperation between the three countries. Before NAFTA, although the US and Canada engaged in free trade, goods bought and sold between Mexico and the US were subject to tariffs, or additional taxes. In 2020, NAFTA was replaced by the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA) as a result of a renegotiation of NAFTA sought by US President Donald Trump.

NAFTA has had generally positive impacts on the economies of the region. Canada's manufacturing output held steady despite global decreases in productivity. Mexico's

maquiladoras, manufacturing plants that take components of products and assemble them for export, have become a fixture of its landscape, especially along the border. The United States also saw a modest economic boost from the agreement.

After the Cold War, the United States retained its position as a global superpower. It has the largest economy of any other country, including the European Union's combined output, accounting for 25 percent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP). It leads the world in military expenditures, and by many measures, is the most influential country in the world. However, it also has the largest prison population and has a much higher infant mortality rate than most other industrialized countries with substantial regional concentrations of high infant mortality. Some wonder if the US will retain its global dominance in the coming decades or become one country among many influential world leaders.

Both Canada and the United States continue to attract immigrants, drawn to these countries by the hope of good jobs and political freedoms. Each country has dealt with the influx of immigration in very different ways. Over 200,000 people immigrate to Canada every year, and the Canadian immigration system gives preference to immigrants for skilled professions. Around 20 percent of Canada's population is foreign-born, the highest of the G8 countries. Canada's immigrants have shaped its cultural landscape and have created a rich cultural mosaic. In contrast, immigrants to the United

States have generally been expected to assimilate, creating a relatively homogeneous cultural landscape rather than retaining individual ethnic identities. This notion of mixing cultural groups to create a more homogeneous national culture is metaphorically termed a melting pot.

Canada and the United States' reactions to refugees have also been markedly different. The United States set a goal of accepting 10,000 Syrian refugees, but immigration from Syria has been contentious politically, with some fearing the potential for terrorist attacks by migrants. Several state governors outright refused to accept Syrian refugees. The Canadian government, in contrast, agreed to resettle 25,000 Syrians in 2016. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau greeted the refugees' first plane, offering winter clothing and stuffed animals and saying, "Welcome home." Canada has welcomed the world's displaced peoples throughout history, accepting 1.2 million refugees since World War II.

Undocumented immigration to the United States continues to be another significant political issue. Around 11 million undocumented migrants currently live in the US. Just over 50 percent are from Mexico. As drug crime worsened in Central America, undocumented migration from those countries surged, and many now make a long and dangerous trek from Central America through Mexico in the hope of reaching US soil. Undocumented and unaccompanied child migrants, in particular, have increased dramatically in recent years. As

countries experience an economic decline, political turmoil, and often dangerous living conditions, migrants will likely continue to flock to Canada and the US in search of a better life.

The freedom of personal expression in the United States has supported individual ingenuity and creative ambition to create the world's largest economy. US citizens have pushed American corporations to become a significant force in the world markets. Products and franchises from the United States are being distributed throughout the world. Items such as fast food, computers, news networks, and Hollywood movies have become the products of choice in countries worldwide. The English language dominates the Internet, which has been heavily influenced by US corporations. The power of the American Dream, the idea that through hard work, anyone can achieve upward mobility and financial success, as portrayed in the US media, holds sway in people's minds both in the United States and abroad.

The size of the US population (more than 310 million as of 2010) and its vast resource base have allowed it to become a world military superpower. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States became the most powerful military force globally. The United States has also dominated the world's economy and its communications networks. The advancements of multinational corporations have, in essence, enabled the sale of America to the rest of the world. The selling

of American products and the broad consumer market in the United States have provided the profits that have fueled global economic markets.

The United States has become a worldwide franchise of its own. Corporate colonialism has advanced the American brand to a level that is now synonymous with consumerism, success, and power worldwide. Media advancements have promoted the concept of the American Dream across the seven seas. The reaction of the global community includes both admiration and disdain. Many view Americanism as interchangeable with globalization. Some welcome it; others reject it. The country of Iran is an example of this dichotomy. Young people in Iran wearing blue jeans gather in secret to watch American television programming from a hidden illegal satellite dish, while at the same time, the anti-American forces in their government condemn America as decadent, immoral, and imperialistic.

Corporate colonialism has become a dominant force impacting the global cultural fabric. Supporters appreciate access to American goods and services. At the same time, opponents claim that the English language and the American corporate franchise system destroy the culture and heritage of untold millions who see their unique traditional ways of life being overshadowed and destroyed.

Some argue that American television advertisements exemplify

a trend that supports conformity and uniformity in American culture. They contend that America's unique cultural diversity, which historically has provided ingenuity and creativity, is being eroded by the franchising of similar retail products, fast food, professional sports, and Hollywood entertainment that stifle the creative will of the American people. Others continue to see opportunities to pursue the American Dream and believe that innovation and ideas continue to emerge despite these trends.

Many people worry about the future of the American Dream. American culture continues to evolve as people face changing economic and social conditions. The United States has developed into one of the most powerful countries on the planet.

9.4 REGIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

The Northern Core

The Northeastern Core includes the upper Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan); the mid-Atlantic states of Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, New Jersey plus northern Virginia; and the southern New England states of Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. It also includes southern Ontario, Canada's capital (Ottawa), and its largest city (Toronto). The physical environments of the Northeastern Core are quite diverse, including the northern Gulf-Atlantic Coastal Plain, the northern Appalachians, and the area surrounding the Great Lakes. This region, anchored by North America's largest metropolis, New York, is the United States' economic heart and Canada and home to more than a third of each country's population. The megalopolis, the built-up area from Washington, DC, to Boston, is part of this region. The core region contains the Manufacturing/Rust Belt, which was once the central manufacturing region for North America but suffered a decline with the information age's advent. The core region hosts the headquarters of

countless corporations, banks, financial markets (e.g., Wall Street), universities (from community colleges to the Ivy League), cultural institutions (e.g., Broadway, world-class museums, dance and music organizations), and even global organizations such as the United Nations.

This vast region includes geographic swaths of both wealth and economic suffering. Eight of the United States' ten wealthiest counties are in this region, most of them in the Washington, DC, area, and several billionaires live in New York City. Meanwhile, cities such as Detroit and Cleveland have suffered from deindustrialization and have experienced a significant population decline since the 1950s. For instance, Detroit has lost 61 percent of its population since 1950, and the decline continues. The city decreased in population by 25 percent just between 2000 and 2010. While manufacturing is not dead in the Northeastern Core, heavy industry has been in long-term decline.

New England and the Canadian Maritimes

New England and the Canadian Maritimes overlap with the Northeastern Core because its major city, Boston, is considered the megalopolis's northern edge. South of Boston, the low-lying states of New England was the center of colonial

settlement in the region and were the birthplace of America's Industrial Revolution. Southern New England began as an agricultural and fishing colony, and as industry developed in the nineteenth century, the region attracted European immigrants from Ireland, Italy, and elsewhere to work in its factories. The highly skilled workforce helped maintain a strong economy in southern New England, although there has been increased unemployment and economic hardship. Today the region has a more diverse economic base, including recreation and tourism, finance, telecommunications, and health care. The mountains of western New England have been particularly attractive for the development of ski resorts, and the coasts of New England are popular for summer vacations.

As you move north from Boston, the terrain becomes more rugged, and the soil less fertile. There are fewer economic reasons for people to live in northern New England, and the states of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine have always been less densely populated than the southern New England states. Maine is the least densely populated state in this region; about 90 percent of its land is forested, making it the most forested fifty United States. The vast Empty Quarter in western Maine consists of five million acres of privately owned forest and no permanent human inhabitants. Maine's leading economic activity is manufacturing, and the bulk of it is oriented around paper and other wood products.

Northern New England transitions to the even more rugged and remote uplands of the Canadian Maritimes: New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. The soil quality is relatively poor, as glaciers removed most of it during the various ice ages. The region has a harsh climate and is removed from Canada's major population centers and the eastern United States. The Maritime Provinces have always been oriented to the sea. Fishing and other sea-oriented businesses have historically been strong here, but in recent decades overfishing of the North Atlantic has caused a decline in the fishing economy. Tourism has been increasing as a revenue source, especially in places such as Prince Edward Island, in which tourism is the dominant economic activity. Newfoundland, including Labrador, is Canada's poorest province.

French Canada

West of the Canadian Maritimes lies the province of Quebec, the heart of the St. Lawrence River valley, a lowland separating the Appalachian Mountains to the south from the inhospitable Canadian Shield to the north. As explained in Section 4.4.3 "British versus French Canada," France was the first European country to colonize the coastal regions of what is now Canada, the St. Lawrence River Valley, most of the land surrounding the Great Lakes, and the Ohio and Mississippi

River valleys, south to the Gulf of Mexico. Although Great Britain obtained all that land from France in 1763 following the French and Indian War, enough French inhabitants occupied part of that territory that the region did not automatically become English speaking. Today's core of French Canada is the St. Lawrence Valley from Montreal to the Atlantic coast and west of Montreal to Ottawa, and north to the Hudson Bay. These French speakers, the descendants of the early French settlers, created a vibrant French-Canadian culture. About 21 percent of Canadians speak French as their mother tongue, including about 80 percent of Canadians living in Quebec.

Throughout most of its history, Quebec's people have been rural farmers, eking out a living on less-than-ideal land in a place with a short growing season. One unique characteristic of the farms in French Canada is their size and shape. Early on, the farms were laid out as long lots, maximizing the number of farms that would have access to the transportation artery, usually a river, but sometimes a road. Each farm was about ten times longer than it was wide and had a small access point to the river, some fertile riverfront land, and a woodlot at the farm's rear. This land-use pattern was typical throughout French Canada and can even be seen today in the United States in former French colonies such as Tennessee and Louisiana.

Since then, Quebec's economy has developed to include a manufacturing sector (fueled by abundant hydroelectricity),

tourism, and various tertiary and quaternary industries. Montreal, Canada's second-largest metropolitan area with 3.9 million residents, is the largest French-speaking city in the Western hemisphere. It developed as the region's most important city in the mid-nineteenth century, as it controlled access through the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes. It became a diverse industrial center, with oil refineries, steel mills, flour and sugar refineries, and shop yards for railroad companies. Montreal attracted English speakers and the local Francophones, and at times in its history, it has even had more English speakers than French speakers, despite being surrounded by a Francophone countryside. Most of northern Quebec is sparsely populated because of the lack of quality soil for agriculture, but a paper and pulp industry based on its forests has developed over the twentieth century and hydroelectric power generation.

The American South

The South includes the entire southeastern portion of the United States from Kentucky south to Louisiana, east to Florida, and north to Virginia. The South consists of most of the Gulf-Atlantic Coastal Plain and the southern portion of the Appalachian Highlands.

Before the Civil War, the coastal plain was dedicated to plantation agriculture using African slave labor. Land not used

for plantation crops such as tobacco, cotton, and rice was typically farmed by poor whites and later by poor blacks. Some were sharecroppers, while others farmed their small plots, especially on the lesser-quality land in Appalachia. The South had little urbanization or industrialization at the time of the Civil War. Well into the twentieth century, the region remained rural and economically deprived.

Coal mining was a significant employment source in places such as West Virginia and eastern Kentucky for the first two-thirds of the twentieth century. However, increased mechanization of mining methods and new mining techniques such as mountaintop removal mining, decreased the number of miners needed, even as coal production increased.

The Appalachian South is perennially plagued by high unemployment, poverty, and challenging social conditions. Other rural South areas are also among the nation's most impoverished, including the Mississippi Delta and the lower Mississippi River valley. Despite the continued swaths of poverty in the South, parts of the region have prospered in the past generation as Sun Belt migrants have moved to southern places such as Atlanta, Charlotte, Tampa, Miami, and dozens of smaller cities. This has fueled a period of urbanization and economic growth, and the newfound prosperity has helped integrate the South into the nation's economy.

The Midwest and Great Plains

The center of the continent contains a relatively level agricultural region: the Midwest and the Great Plains. This land includes some of the most fertile agricultural areas globally and has been dubbed America's breadbasket. The climate gets progressively arid as one moves to the west within this region, and the type of agriculture changes with the decrease in precipitation. Closer to the Rocky Mountains, the land is typically used for raising cattle, but enormous grain farms are found where water is available (primarily through irrigation). The water for irrigation comes from the continent's largest aquifer, the Ogallala Aquifer. Water is often pumped to the surface using a system called center pivot irrigation. The heart of the spring wheat belt is North Dakota, and the crop is also common in eastern Montana and Canada's Prairie Provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Winter wheat is common in Kansas and surrounding states. Farther to the east, where precipitation is more abundant, is the Corn Belt, focused in Iowa and Illinois.

In this region, the principal city is Chicago, which developed as a market town for the livestock and grain produced in the surrounding states and was linked to its hinterland through a complex rail line network. Nearly all the major cities of this region developed to buy, sell, and process agricultural

products. Today the Midwest and the Great Plains remain the most critical food-producing areas in North America, although as agriculture has become increasingly mechanized and farms have gotten larger, the number of farmers has decreased. This region, especially the Great Plains, is experiencing a period of long-term population decline and aging.

The American Southwest

The states of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona are considered the Southwest. The climate of the Southwest is arid and receives a high amount of sunlight throughout the year. Desert conditions are integrated with higher elevations in the mountainous areas. Eastern Texas receives more rainfall from the Gulf of Mexico, and western Texas and the states of New Mexico and Arizona are quite arid and receive less rainfall. These conditions are more favorable to cattle ranching than to other agricultural activities. Large farming operations exist where water is available for irrigation. The warmer climate has been attractive for development and people emigrating from the colder regions of the north.

The Southwest has a strong Hispanic heritage and was part of Spain's Mexican colony before England established colonies on the East Coast (the first Spanish settlers arrived in New Mexico in 1598). All three states have a large contingency of

Hispanic residents, some of whom have descended from early pre-United States settlers, while others have come into the United States more recently across the long desert border between Mexico and the United States. According to the 2010 census, about 46 percent of New Mexico's population was Hispanic or Latino, and in Texas and Arizona, were 37 percent and 30 percent, respectively.

In Arizona, strong centrifugal forces have been in play because of its strict legal measures against illegal immigration. This issue exposes the social rift between the more European population of the state and the Hispanic immigrants. In 2008, the US Department of Homeland Security's Office of Immigration Statistics estimated that Arizona had one of the fastest-growing illegal immigrant populations in the country at 8.4 percent of the population (Hoefer, M., et al., 2011). This was the second-highest percentage of undocumented residents in the country, after Nevada. In April 2010, the New York Times reported that Arizona's governor signed the nation's most stringent bill on illegal immigration into law, designed to identify, prosecute, and deport illegal immigrants (Archibold, R. C., 2011). At the same time, Reuters reported that when the bill was debated in the Arizona Senate, the number of illegal immigrants was listed at 10 percent of the population (Reuters, 2011). Some opponents of the strict immigration laws claimed that law enforcement officials would use racial

profiling to target Hispanic residents, and the federal government took the state to court to halt its enforcement.

The Southwest also has a strong Native American presence, especially in New Mexico and Arizona. Twenty-one federally recognized tribes with more than 250,000 people (4.9 percent of the state's population) live in Arizona, and their reservations and traditional communities make up more than one-fourth of the state's land. The Navajo tribe is the largest in the United States, with more than 100,000 members in Arizona alone and others in surrounding states. The considerable Native American and Hispanic population in the Southwest means that non-Hispanic whites make up a minority population in New Mexico and Texas.

The three Southwestern states have been recipients of Sun Belt migrations over the past few decades, as people have moved to the Southwest for tertiary-sector jobs and the region's warm climate. The region is mostly urbanized, and most of the new migrants are moving to cities. Three-fourths of Arizona's population lives in the Phoenix or Tucson metropolitan area. The most populous metropolitan area in the Southwest is Dallas–Fort Worth, Texas, with 6.4 million residents in 2010, making it the fourth-largest metro area in the United States. The Houston metropolitan area is not far behind with 6.1 million residents. Texas's economy used to be based on oil and natural gas, but it has since become more diversified. Residents of these cities work in high-tech manufacturing, health care,

business, and information. One of Texas's most famous high-tech industries in space: Houston is home to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, where astronauts and thousands of others work in the space industry.

The Mountain West

From the Rocky Mountains to the Sierra Nevada and the Cascades and the Intermontane Basins and Plateaus in between, this part of North America has gone from the old Wild West to an area of rapid economic and population growth. The region encompasses western Colorado; western Wyoming; western Montana; Idaho; Nevada; Utah; the eastern portions of Washington, Oregon, California; and the southern portion of the Canadian Rockies.

The population of the Mountain West is growing much faster than the United States population as a whole. For example, Nevada's population grew 32.3 percent from 2000 to 2009, which is more than three times as much as the United States as a whole (9.1 percent). Except for Montana, all US states in this region grew at faster rates than the US average. Utah grew 24.7 percent, Idaho grew 19.5 percent, and Colorado grew 16.8 percent. What is fueling this growth? It is part of the larger pattern of Americans flocking to the Sun Belt, searching for an attractive climate and lifestyle. Jobs have been created

in recreation (gambling, skiing), high-tech firms, and other tertiary sector industries. Many migrants come from southern California because the Mountain West's housing is more affordable, and the region is much less crowded. Nearly all the growth is occurring in urban and suburban areas.

However, the rapid growth of the West since 1990 has come at a cost. In some areas, the large population is putting a strain on physical resources, such as water. Water is a hot-button political issue, particularly in the more arid states such as Nevada. For example, Las Vegas is a desert city that gets 90 percent of its water from a Colorado River reservoir: Lake Mead. This water comes from snowmelt in the Rocky Mountains far to the east, and due to drought and high water demand, Lake Mead's water level has been dropping. If current patterns persist, Las Vegas will have a water crisis soon. The water shortage is happening even though Las Vegas has reduced per capita water usage by raising water prices and creating incentives to remove grass lawns. Las Vegas recycles 94 percent of all sewage water, which is the highest rate in the United States.

As the West's population increased rapidly, the region's urban areas became part of the real estate bubble of the early 2000s. Real estate prices grew, and the housing industry built one residential subdivision after another in the suburbs surrounding cities such as Las Vegas, Denver, and Salt Lake City. However, in the late 2000s, the real estate market

collapsed in many parts of the country, and Western cities were hard hit. As of early 2011, three of the five states with the highest foreclosure rates were in this region (Nevada, Utah, and Idaho), and the others were bordering states (Arizona and California).

The Pacific Coast

The Pacific Coast includes California, Oregon, and Washington, plus the southwestern part of British Columbia in Canada. This region, geographically constituting California and the Pacific Northwest, are quite different from each other in terms of climate and economy. However, both areas are part of the so-called Ring of Fire that encircles the Pacific Ocean. The Ring of Fire is a zone of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions near where the Pacific tectonic plate meets the surrounding plates. In the United States, two areas of concern are the San Andreas Fault in California and Mount St. Helens in Washington. The 1906 earthquake that destroyed San Francisco due to activity on the San Andreas Fault, and scientists predict that strong earthquakes will reappear along the fault in the future. Thousands of small earthquakes occur along the fault every year. Mount St. Helens is a volcano in the Cascades that erupted in 1980, killing fifty-seven people and destroying hundreds of square miles of forest.

The Pacific Coast represents a large population center, a

continent away from the North American core. Most of the region's population is urban, and Los Angeles and its metropolitan area are the most extensive settlement areas. Twelve percent of the US population lives in California (thirty-seven million people), and the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area has nearly eighteen million people. Los Angeles is the second-largest US city after New York. Los Angeles is the quintessential automobile city. It developed into a major city in the mid-twentieth century when automobile ownership became common, and people who lived in the area tended to move to suburbs connected by an extensive highway system. Unlike cities in other parts of North America, Los Angeles is a highly decentralized city formed during different transportation regimes.

The Pacific Coast region is also famous for its agriculture. California's Central Valley lies between the Coast Ranges to the west and the Sierra Nevada to the east and is among the world's most productive agricultural areas. The irrigated farmland in the valley produces all types of nontropical crops and is the largest US producer of tomatoes, grapes, almonds, and other foods. When other parts of the country are still frozen in the winter months, the Central Valley fields are already producing bountiful harvests. California is also famous for its wine production, especially in Napa Valley near San Francisco.

Besides agriculture, the economic base of the Pacific Coast is

quite diverse and vibrant. If it were an independent country, California would be the world's sixth-largest economy. Los Angeles is considered the US entertainment industry's capital and other major industries include aerospace, manufacturing, and foreign trade. The port of Los Angeles is the busiest in North America, receiving goods from China and other Asian countries. Silicon Valley, near San Francisco, is a crucial area for high-tech research and Internet commerce. The Pacific Northwest is home to major corporations such as Boeing (whose headquarters recently moved to Chicago), Microsoft, and other famous companies such as Starbucks, Amazon.com, REI, T-Mobile, Costco, and Eddie Bauer. One of the wealthiest Americans, Bill Gates, lives near Seattle.

Vancouver is Canada's third-largest metropolitan area across the border to the north, with over two million residents. Vancouver is unlike any other city in North America. Nearly one-third of its residents are of Chinese origin, and more than half its population speak a language other than English at home. Vancouver began as a logging town but developed into its position as the Asian gateway to Canada because of its port, Canada's busiest. Vancouver is a popular location for the film industry and is sometimes dubbed as "Hollywood North." It is also growing in the biotechnology and software industries.

The North

The North is the least densely populated region in North America due to its brutally cold winters, short growing season, and poor soils. It includes the boreal forests of the upper Great Lakes region and the Canadian Shield and the territory to the north of the tree line that extends beyond the Arctic Circle. Physically, this region is immense, including the state of Alaska plus most of Canada. The climate is similar to that of Russia: cold continental and arctic climates, arctic air masses swooping down from the north, and long winters. Most northern portions of North America live in the forested areas rather than in the frozen Arctic.

Two groups of people live in this region. First, are the native peoples who have always lived there. They are small in number and traditionally make a living by hunting and fishing. More recently, the indigenous populations such as the Inuit and the First Nations in Canada subsist by combining wage employment with their traditional means of living off the land. American Indians or Alaskan natives make up about 15 percent of Alaska's population, for a total of roughly 106,000 people. In Canada's Northwest Territories, First Nations people make up just over half the population, but the total population is relatively small, only about 41,000 in the entire territory. In Nunavut, the native population is about 85

percent of the total 30,000 residents, living in a territory the size of Western Europe.

The other residents are more recent immigrants who are there to exploit the land's natural resources. The economy is dominated by the primary economic sector: forestry, oil and natural gas extraction, and mining. In the Canadian Shield, metallic ores such as copper, gold, nickel, silver, and uranium are found in the rocks, and diamond mines are in operation, as mine producing rare earth elements used in computer screens, electric car batteries, and computer hard drives. These elements include metals such as cerium, terbium, dysprosium, and neodymium. Alaska is an oil-producing state, and the decision of whether to open additional areas of Alaska's Arctic to oil drilling remains controversial and uncertain.

9.5 CANADA

Canadian Provinces and Territories

Canada's democratic state shares a similar developmental history and economic status with the United States. As of 2011, Canada had a population of just over thirty-four million (2011), which is less than California's population. Canada is larger than the United States, making it the second-largest country in the world. However, despite this vast territory for a relatively small population, more than 90 percent of Canadians live within 150 miles of the US border. Northern Canada is not considered part of Canada's ecumene, or habitable zone, for permanent human settlement. Only a narrow band of territory in southern and eastern Canada has the climate and physical geography suitable for agricultural production and widespread settlement.

Moreover, Canada's economy is so closely tied to that of the United States that it makes sense for people to live close to the US border. Canada consists of ten provinces and three territories, with Ottawa being the nation's capital, and Toronto is its largest city. Canada consists of ten provinces and

three territories. Ottawa is the nation's capital, and Toronto is its largest city.

Physical Geography of Canada

Ontario has by far the largest population of any of Canada's provinces, with about 39 percent of the total. Quebec, the dominantly French-speaking province, is home to about 23 percent. Almost everyone else lives in British Columbia, west of the Rocky Mountains (13 percent); in the prairies (18 percent); or along the Atlantic coast (7 percent). Canada's far north's wide-open areas are occupied by only one-third of 1 percent of the population.

Type D (continental) climates dominate most of central Canada, with their characteristically warm summers and cold winters, although the farther north you go, the cooler the summers are. Canada's west coast receives the most rainfall, between eighty and one hundred inches a year, while coastal areas in the Maritime Provinces can receive up to sixty inches per year. The northern territory of Nunavut barely receives ten inches per year, usually in the form of snow. Of course, far northern Canada has an arctic type E climate, and conditions there are so harsh that only a few people inhabit it. The cultural influence of the colder climates and the long winters

on the people is evident by the sports that are enjoyed by most Canadian citizens. Ice hockey is Canada's most prevalent sport and its most popular spectator sport. Other sports such as curling are also common in Canada.

Canada has abundant natural resources for its population. The Canadian Shield is an area of rock and forest covering much of central Canada around the Hudson Bay. This region, and the area to the east and west, provide timber and minerals for Canadian industries and export. In the Maritime Provinces of the east, the main economic activities include fishing and agriculture. Some of Canada's best farmland is located along the St. Lawrence River and in the southern Prairie Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. The St. Lawrence River region includes dairy farms and agriculture, which provide food for the region's larger cities. The province of Ontario has fertile farmland on the north and east sides of the Great Lakes. The farmland in the Prairie Provinces has much larger grain and beef operations.

Centered in the province of Alberta is a vast region of fossil fuel exploration. Coal, oil, and natural gas are found there in abundance, and much of it is exported to the United States for profit. Oil is found absorbed in surface soil called tar sands and is being extracted for energy. When tar sands are heated, the oil is separated and refined for fuel. Projections are that there is more oil in Canada's tar sands than in the underground reserves of Saudi Arabia. Natural resources have even filtered

into the cultural arena: Edmonton's professional hockey team is called the Edmonton Oilers.

The Rocky Mountains and the coastal ranges located in western Canada provide for mining and lumber mills. On the coast in British Columbia, Vancouver has become an important port for Canada to export and import goods to and from the Pacific Rim. The Yukon Territory, also located in the mountains, has experienced a gold rush in years past. Canada has adequate natural resources to provide for its people and gain wealth.

British versus French Canada

French fishers and fur traders initially colonized Canada, the British later took it from the French, and immigrants from various other countries moved there to farm and otherwise make a living. Although none of the provinces retain French names, countless cities, especially in Quebec, have French names, among them Montreal, Trois-Rivières, Charlesbourg, and Beauport.

Several provinces' names indicate the British connection: Nova Scotia means "New Scotland," and it was so named by the British when they took over the island from the French. Prince Edward Island was named for the father of the famous nineteenth-century British queen, Victoria. It is clear the

remnants of British colonialism in the way the Canadian government is organized. Canada, like many countries of Europe, including Great Britain, is a parliamentary democracy. The monarch of the United Kingdom is still the top-ranking government official in Canada, but only as a figurehead. The queen (or king) appoints a governor-general to be their representative in the Canadian federal government. Again, this is a symbolic position. There are two chambers, a House of Commons and a Senate. Members of the House of Commons are elected and are called members of Parliament (MPs). Senators are appointed to a lifelong term by the prime minister.

As of 2006, about 58 percent of Canadians spoke English as their primary language, French was the mother tongue of 22 percent, and another one-fifth of the population (20 percent) spoke a mother tongue other than English or French (Province and Territory, 2006). For most of Canada, the lingua franca remains English. The French-speaking portion of Canada is a reminder of Canada's history as a French colony. Many of today's French speakers are descendants of those earlier French settlers. The proportion of French speakers in Canada is declining as more and more immigrants (who also have higher fertility rates than Francophones [French speakers]) arrive from other parts of the world and as more Francophones begin using English instead of French as their primary language. The new immigrants (along with native peoples) make up 20

percent of Canada's population who speak neither English nor French as their native language. About 90 percent of Canadian Francophones live in Quebec, a center of French culture in Canada.

The separation between French Canada and British Canada goes back to colonial times. In the 1530s, the French were the first to develop fur-trading activities in the region and colonize what is present-day Canada, calling it New France. The French claimed much of the St. Lawrence River valley and the Great Lakes region, including the region that is now Ontario. When Britain began to dominate the eastern coast of North America in the 1680s, they entered into a series of wars with France. As a result of these wars, New France was eventually turned over to Britain.

Not wanting endless war with France, Britain allowed the French-dominated region to retain its land ownership system, civil laws, and the Catholic faith. The Revolutionary War in 1776, which granted the United States independence from Great Britain, also pushed many people of English descent—especially those who had sided with the British during the Revolutionary War, from the United States into Canada. British North America no longer included the United States; Canada became the leading British colony in North America.

In an attempt to keep the peace between French and English

settlers, in 1791, the British Parliament divided Quebec into Upper and Lower Canada, which later evolved into the provinces of English-speaking Ontario and French-speaking Quebec. The Maritime Provinces of the east were then separated into individual provinces.

The cultural differences between Francophone Canada and the rest of Canada have since erupted into severe political conflicts. The Francophone areas, mainly southern Quebec, argue that they are mistreated since they have to learn English, but the rest of the country is not required to learn French.

During the second half of the twentieth century, many people in Quebec supported a separatist movement that sought to break Quebec from Canada's rest into an independent country. In the 1980s, the separatist initiative lost in a public vote, but only by a small margin. The issue of Quebec's sovereignty continued to be raised in the public arena. In 1998, Canada's Supreme Court ruled that Quebec could not separate from the rest of Canada under international law but that the matter would have to be negotiated between Quebec and the rest of Canada if secession was to proceed.

French and English are the two official languages of the Canadian government as a whole, but the French people in Quebec, fearing that English was dominating the media, the Internet, and industry to such an extent that it was endangering their French culture, have declared French as the

only official language of the province. To combat the encroachment of English, laws were enacted in Quebec requiring all public advertising to be in French, or if other languages are used, they must be half the size of the French letters. All businesses employing more than fifty employees are required to conduct all business in French. Immigrants who wish to be citizens of Quebec must learn French. All primary and secondary education would occur in French unless the child's parents were educated in English elsewhere in Canada. Civil servants dubbed the "language police" monitor and enforced the French language laws. A business found to be out of compliance with the language laws could be fined or shut down. Even though Quebec's official language is French, since the national government takes place in both English and French, some services are still available in Quebec in English.

French Canada does not include the entire province of Quebec. Northern Quebec has traditionally been native Cree territory. When Quebec's initiative to secede from Canada was being considered, an additional initiative was presented by the Cree to separate northern Quebec from the French region of Quebec. This would have caused Quebec's French separatist region to lose major hydroelectric dams and essential mineral and timber reserves. Other areas of Quebec that did not hold a French majority would then have promoted Quebec and joining Ontario.

For Quebec to remain economically competitive, they would

need the northern Cree region to remain part of the province to use the resources and energy. They would also need the businesses in Quebec to stay there, although many would probably have left if Quebec had become an independent state with French as the only language. When secession was being considered, it was found that businesses that employed more than fifty employees did not want to switch over and conduct all their business in French; they were conducting all their business in English to work with the global economic community.

In 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was established between Canada, the United States, and Mexico. The goal was to open up new business operations lines between the three countries and increase economic opportunities to better compete with the European Union and the Pacific Rim nations. In 2020, NAFTA was replaced by the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). What would Quebec do if it separated from Canada? Would Quebec be able to join the NAFTA agreement? What if the other NAFTA partners cut off Quebec? Quebec would have faced severe economic consequences if they had separated from Canada. Several English-speaking businesses have already moved to Ontario, Canada's most populous province, to avoid changing to French. It appears Quebec will remain with the rest of Canada and work out any internal cultural issues.

Other Ethnic Groups in Canada

Of course, we cannot forget the native groups who were displaced when the Europeans arrived. About 1.2 million people identify themselves as Aboriginal living in Canada or about 3.8 percent of the total population. They include North American Indians (also called First Nations), Métis (descendants of both Europeans and American Indians), and Inuit (inhabitants of the far Arctic north). Of those three groups, Inuit are the smallest, with only about fifty thousand remaining. These native people represent more than six hundred recognized groups and sixty-five language dialects, although only a handful of these languages are still spoken by a large enough core of people to remain viable languages for the long term.

Countless place names in Canada, just as in the United States, are derived from native words. For example, Quebec's city is built at the original head of navigation on the St. Lawrence River. Its name comes from an Algonquin word for "where the river narrows." Canada's word is likely derived from the St. Lawrence Iroquois word Kanata, meaning "village" or "settlement." While the French explorer Jacques Cartier traveled up the St. Lawrence River in 1535, the indigenous peoples directed him to a specific village, the future Quebec City, using the word Kanata. He later used Canada to refer to

the general area, and European mapmakers adopted it for the entire region.

Quebec is not the only place where devolutionary forces have been dividing cultural groups in Canada. In 1999, Nunavut officially broke from the Northwest Territory to become its territory. Nunavut has only about thirty thousand people in an area larger than any other province or territory in Canada. It comprises about one-fifth of Canada's land area. Most of the people who had claimed the land before the Europeans arrived are Inuit. Iqaluit, the capital city of Nunavut, is on Baffin Island near Canada's east coast.

Canada has a great deal of ethnic diversity. One measure of this is the number of languages spoken there. One source estimates that there are about 145 languages spoken in Canada, including English and French. This reflects both the rich native heritage and the history of immigration from around the world. As of 2006, the foreign-born population was 6.2 million, or nearly 20 percent of Canada's population. Few countries match this level of immigration. Even the United States had only about a 12.5 percent foreign-born population in 2006. If Canada's current immigration rates continue, by 2017, more than 22 percent of Canada's population will be foreign-born, which equals the high rate seen in the early twentieth century, during the golden age of Eastern European immigration to North America. During this period, people

from all Eastern European countries immigrated to all parts of Canada (Statistics Canada).

The current surge of immigrants to Canada does not include many Europeans. Instead, these immigrants come from Asian countries, especially China, and countries in South Asia, such as India and Pakistan. If immigration patterns stay the same, by 2017, about one in five people in Canada will belong to a non-white minority group. According to the 2010 Canadian census, more than a million Chinese and more than a half-million South Asians lived in Canada. Other groups increasing rapidly include people from the Middle East and Korea.

The Canadian Economy

Not surprisingly, Canada and the United States are each others' most significant trading partners. More than 80 percent of Canadian exports go to the United States, and 70 percent of Canada's imports come from the United States. Except for some natural-resource industries, most businesses are centered in Canadian cities to take advantage of the available labor force. Canada is rapidly moving toward a knowledge-based economy built on innovation and technology. Knowledge-intensive industries, such as biotechnology and information technology, are on the rise, and these are typically located in cities to facilitate partnering with universities and other researchers.

Although Canada is developing into a knowledge-based economy, the Canadian economy's foundations have always been its abundant natural resources. Canada's primary industries have traditionally been agriculture, fishing, mining, fuel/energy, and logging/forestry. Success in tapping these natural resources for their economic benefit allowed the country to double in population since 1960, while the economy has increased sevenfold. The primary industries now make up less than 10 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). Just as in the United States, the most dramatic structural change in the economy has been the rise of the service sector, which now employs about three-quarters of all Canadians and generates over 60 percent of the GDP. Canadian manufacturing has been an important sector of the economy with close ties to the United States and multinational corporations.

Canada's economy is tightly tied to that of the United States. One of the best examples is how the Canadian economy fluctuates depending on whether the Canadian dollar was weak or strong compared with the US dollar. For instance, in 2002, one American dollar was worth about \$1.60 in Canada. For many years, the American dollar was much stronger on the world market than the Canadian dollar; therefore, Canadian goods and labor were less expensive for Americans than comparable US labor and products. During the time of the weak Canadian dollar, many film and television industries

moved to Canada to film television shows and movies, as it was less expensive to do so in Canada. Many popular television shows and movies have been shot in Canada, particularly in Toronto and Vancouver.

More recently, the value of the American dollar declined against other major currencies. The Canadian dollar remained strong, which meant that Canada's goods became much less affordable in the United States, causing the television and film industries to move back south of the border and Canadian exports to the United States to decline. In 2007, the Canadian dollar and the US dollar reached parity for the first time in thirty years. The two currencies continue to fluctuate with market values.

As mentioned earlier, NAFTA, the 1994 trilateral agreement between Canada, the United States, and Mexico, was one of the most significant economic events in North American history. For Canada, the agreement has meant more secure, stable access to US and Mexican markets. The agreement eliminated many tariffs; opened previously protected sectors in agriculture, energy, textiles, and automotive trade; and set specific trade rules in services such as finance, transportation, and telecommunications. Perhaps most importantly, for Canada, the agreement set standards for settling trade disputes.

The United States continues to exert its powerful influence

on many countries globally, but perhaps on none so strongly as Canada. Because of the geographical proximity of the two countries and the fact that the vast majority of Canadians live very close to the US border, speak English as their first language, and share a significant number of cultural similarities, American trends tend to be adopted by Canadians. Canadians differentiate themselves from Americans in legal issues, laws, and health care. For example, Canada has a health care system funded by the provinces with financial help from the federal government that provides free services to its citizens. Canadians often point to this difference as one of the defining elements of their culture that is different from the United States.

Canada is a great consumer of American popular culture. Canadians listen to, watch, and read tremendous quantities of American music, television and movies, and news, books, and other literature—so much so that some Canadians believed Canadian culture was in danger of being extinguished. In response to these concerns, a law was passed, and a watchdog agency created so that a certain percentage of all radio and television broadcasts emanating from Canadian radio and television stations had to originate in Canada or have significant Canadian content. Others were less worried about the impact of American pop culture on Canadian culture. This segment of the Canadian population felt that Canadians have long identified themselves in contrast to Americans;

therefore, consuming American books, newspapers, television shows, and movies would only give Canadians a more significant basis of comparison and thus strengthen the Canadian identity and perception of Canadian culture.

9.6 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Population Distribution in North America

The United States population is nearly 330 million as of 2020. Canada now has over thirty-four million people. The US population is growing by about 2.5 million people each year. A little less than half the growth can be attributed to immigration and the rest to birth rates. The growth pace is slower than the world average but more rapid than many other industrialized countries such as those in Europe.

The population is not uniformly spread over North America, nor are the population growth rates the same in all locations. Most Canadians live near the US border. The North American population tends to be clustered in cities, with about 80 percent of US citizens residing in urban/suburban areas. Additionally, over time, the population has been moving southward and westward. The US states experiencing the greatest rates of population growth include those located on the southern portion of the eastern seaboard and Texas,

Nevada, Utah, California, Oregon, and Washington. Three states, California, Texas, and Florida accounted for about a third of the entire US population growth since 1990. Still, the Northeast is the most densely populated area of the country thanks, in large part, to the megalopolis that forms the corridor and encompasses the cities from Washington, DC, north to Boston. The largest concentration of Canadians lives in the most southern-reaching province of Ontario. For this reason, the province of Ontario is often referred to as South Canada.

United States Census

In general, the population of minorities is growing most rapidly. Some of the fastest-growing populations in the United States are Hispanics. Another interesting factor in population growth is the increase in life expectancy. As more people live longer, the growth of the segment of the population aged sixty-five has doubled in the last fifty years. However, it appears that the growth of this population segment is slowing. Of this group, the most significant increase was seen in people aged eighty-five years and older.

The American population tends to be on the move. The United States Census Bureau data show that the average American moves once every seven years; these data further predict that about forty million people move each year (US Census Bureau). Data also indicate that Americans will move

to a metropolitan area. Urbanization has been a trend since about 1950. Until that time, most Americans lived in small towns or more rural settings. The population density of the cities, especially suburban areas, has grown steadily since that time, bringing about a rural-to-urban population shift. Now a significant majority of people in North America live in suburban areas.

Urbanization has brought some challenges. The layout of these areas often makes owning a car a necessity; thus, traffic congestion is a significant problem in many suburban and urban areas. Other issues include overcrowded schools, racial tensions, and a widening economic gap between the wealthy and impoverished. As people move to the cities, housing and other resources might not meet demand, forcing prices upward. The gap between the cost of living in an urban area and the population's ability to pay has contributed to poverty and homelessness. Environmental issues also abound, including how to reduce or eliminate smog, manage waste, and ensure adequate clean water supplies.

Migration Patterns

The United States has not only undergone a massive rural-to-urban shift in its population; intermigration within the United States from one region to another has also been prevalent.

Each of the US regions has witnessed changes in demographics because of migration patterns.

In the United States' agricultural regions, such as the Midwest, the migration pattern has been caused by changes in farm technology. Portions of the United States were opened up for agriculture because of the Homestead Act of 1862, where each person could receive 160 acres from the government to start a farm. They could keep the acres if they lived on them and farmed them for years. In the 1800s, 160 acres was enough land to support a family if conditions were appropriate. The Industrial Revolution brought about improved farm equipment and technology. Larger and more expensive tractors and improved farming methods pushed the small farmers to sell out. Farms increased in size, and fewer people were required to operate them. Since fewer farm workers are needed in rural areas, there has been a major rural-to-urban shift in the population. Central cities are increasing in population, while small towns and rural areas in the Midwest and across the nation are decreasing in population.

Urban Development

North America's urban landscape has been shaped both by colonization and by industrialization. Most of the early settlements in the region were small and were located close to the eastern coast. The Appalachian Mountains provided

a formidable obstacle for early settlers before 1765. As settlement and colonization expanded, people moved steadily westward, still primarily situating close to waterways. Even today, most urban centers are located close to water.

During this time, immigration and natural growth expanded North America's population. In 1610, the population of what is now the United States, excluding indigenous groups, was a meager 350 people. In just 200 years, the population reached over 7 million. In 1620, just 60 people occupied what is now the Canadian city of Quebec. Today, the United States population stands at over 330 million, and Canada's population is over 35 million, and both countries are highly urbanized.

North America's cities themselves have also changed over time. The traditional North American city had a core commercial area, called the central business district (or CBD), surrounded by workers' homes. Density was generally highest near the city center and decreased as you traveled outward from the urban center and rural areas.

As deindustrialization occurred, suburbanization replaced the previous rural to urban migration. The rush to move to the city center for jobs in industry was replaced by the desire for more land and spacious, single-family homes. However, the decrease in housing density and the increase in both home size and acreage came sprawl. Urban sprawl refers to expanding

human settlements away from central cities and into low-density, car-dependent communities. Sprawl is associated with urban decentralization, the spreading out of the population that resulted from suburbanization. Counter urbanization, the shift in populations from urban centers to suburban and rural settlements, has been prevalent in North America since World War II. In some areas, rural populations have grown as a result of counter urbanization. As sprawl continued, edge cities developed. An edge city is an urban area situated outside of the traditional central business district.

In historical North American cities, the central city was home to most jobs and services and had relatively high-density housing. Because everything was located close to the city center, people could often walk home to work or take efficient transit systems like streetcars. Urban decentralization has not only resulted in sprawl but has also created suburbs that are entirely dependent on automobiles.

Few suburbs have shops or restaurants, and most people living in the suburbs have to commute to work. Since jobs are no longer clustered in the city center, cities have faced challenges in developing mass transit systems that tie together numerous disconnected suburban developments and link people with their places of work, many of which are now located in surrounding edge cities.

Toronto, for example, Canada's largest city, has a population

of 2.8 million within its city limits. Its surrounding suburbs, however, have grown considerably in recent decades. The entire metropolitan area now has a population of over 5.5 million, and the average daily commute time is over 1 hour. Washington, DC's urban decentralization has extended north into Maryland and south into Virginia to the south. Its subway system, a technological marvel when it opened in 1976, has not kept pace with its urban growth, and numerous sections of rail lines were shut down for an extended period in 2016 and again in 2019 to conduct major system and station repairs.

In some areas, the metropolitan area has grown so large that it overlaps with neighboring metropolitan areas. This is referred to as a megalopolis. The Northeast Megalopolis extends along the Interstate 95 corridor from Washington, DC north through Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York to Boston. It covers about 2 percent of the land area in the United States but is home to over 50 million people, around 16 percent of the US population. It is projected to grow to 58 million people by 2025. The Northeast Megalopolis is just one of many growing urban areas in North America. The Atlanta Metropolitan area may one day extend into Charlotte, North Carolina. Toronto's urban development may creep south, intermixing with development in Detroit, Cleveland, and Chicago. Florida may one day become one megalopolis linking Tampa, Orlando, Miami, and Jacksonville. These massive urban

settlements will provide new opportunities for creative housing and transportation planning.

One creative approach to urban sprawl is New Urbanism, a movement to create urban landscapes with walkable neighborhoods, accessible public spaces, and housing and shops nearby. More than 600 towns and villages have been developed in the United States alone following the New Urbanist principles. Celebration, Florida, for example, near Orlando, was designed and built by the Walt Disney Company and includes a variety of apartments and single-family homes close to shops, restaurants, and a movie theater – all of which are within walking distance for residents. In other areas, New Urbanism is more broadly integrated into long-term urban plans. One criticism of New Urbanist developments is that while on the surface, they promote mixed-income developments, in practice, most housings in these areas are for the middle and upper classes. Housing prices in these developments are simply beyond the reach of many low-income families.

As urban to suburban migration continued, some desired instead to move back from the sprawling suburbs to be closer to the downtown area's amenities. This often led to gentrification, where increased property values displace lower-income families and small businesses. Initially, low-income, historic housing near the city center attracted middle- and upper-income families. As these families moved in and

renovated the housing, other families did the same. Over time, this renovation increased property values – an advantage for city officials who saw an increase in property tax revenue. However, for the poorest in the communities, this increase in property values often meant that they could no longer afford to rent near the central city. Given the sprawling suburbs' auto-dependency, where would someone live if they had no transportation and worked in the downtown area? The walkability of the downtown, an amenity for those relocating from the suburbs, was often necessary for low-income workers.

Gentrification also changes neighborhoods' racial and ethnic makeup, as most people moving into these changing urban areas are typically white. The Bedford- Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn, for example, was traditionally an African American community but, beginning in the 2000s, began to experience gentrification. The percentage of white residents increased from 2.4 percent in 2000 to 22 percent in 2013. Median home prices jumped, too, from \$400,000 in 2011 to \$765,000 in 2016. New businesses have located in the area, and gentrification has funded significant infrastructure improvements. However, for the neighborhood's poorest residents, these improvements have pushed housing and rent prices beyond what they can afford.

Immigration

Early immigration to America was dominated by people from the British Isles, resulting in an American population for whom speaking English and practicing Protestant Christianity was the norm. There were some regional exceptions to this, such as Catholicism in Maryland and the widespread speaking of German in Pennsylvania. Nevertheless, English and Protestantism were standard in the American colonies. As migrants arrived in the United States from non-English-speaking countries, within a generation, they learned English and assimilated into American society, giving rise to the idea of the United States as a cultural melting pot. People were drawn to the United States by the hope of economic opportunities; most immigrants were poor and came to the United States to make a living and improve their financial well-being. They viewed assimilation into mainstream society as a necessity for success. They believed in the American Dream that someone could achieve upward mobility and financial success through hard work no matter their background. The dream came true for millions of Americans but remained out of reach for many who live in poverty.

As of 2019, the United States Census Bureau estimates that there are approximately 330 million people and was the third-most populated country in the world after China and India. Among developed countries, the US population is one of the

fastest-growing, at about 1 percent each year. This is thanks to a fertility rate of about 2.1 that is higher than the 1.5 for that of most European countries and a positive net migration rate (more people immigrating to the United States than emigrating from it). In terms of human well-being, life expectancy is more than seventy-eight years for men, and the average woman can expect to live for more than eighty years. While this may seem high, especially compared with a century ago, life expectancy in the United States is lower than in forty-nine other countries.

Although English has remained the dominant language, as a country of immigrants, the United States is home to people from all corners of the world and home to many cultural or ethnic minority groups. According to the 2010 census, the ethnic minority groups in the United States included 16.3 percent Hispanic (who can be of any race); 12.6 percent black or African American; 5.0 percent Asian and Pacific Islander; and 1.0 percent Native American (American Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts) (US Census Bureau). An interesting trend is that Asians are growing faster than any other ethnic group in California, the nation's largest state. The 2010 census reported that the Asian population in California had increased 31.5 percent since 2000 to a total of five million.

Hispanic Population

One of the most striking shifts in immigration patterns of the past few decades has been the dramatic increase in Hispanic/Latino immigrants to the United States. While there have long been Spanish speakers living in the United States (recall that Spain colonized Florida, Texas, and the Southwest before those regions became part of the United States), for most of American history, the Hispanic minority had little impact outside of a few areas of the country. In 1970, Hispanics made up less than 5 percent of the US population, but by 2010, forty-eight million Hispanics made up about 16 percent of the population. For the first time, Hispanics were the largest ethnic minority in the United States, surpassing blacks as the most significant minority, starting with the 2000 US census (12.5 percent Hispanic compared with 12.3 percent black). The US Hispanic population doubled between the 1990 and 2000 censuses. Between 2000 and 2006, Hispanic population growth accounted for about half the nation's growth and grew about four times faster than the country's population as a whole.

The growth of the US Hispanic population is a direct result of increased immigration from Latin America to the United States in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The Hispanic population has higher fertility rates than the non-Hispanic US population.

Nearly half the Hispanics in the United States live in California or Texas, although there has been a substantial increase in the Hispanic population outside those states in the past decade, especially in the South. For example, Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee, and North and South Carolina all experienced Hispanic population growth rates between 55 and 61 percent from 2000 to 2006. All regions of the country saw double-digit growth rates of their Hispanic populations during that time. In places such as California, the large Hispanic population has an especially significant impact on the economy, politics, and every aspect of social life: more than one-third of Californians are Hispanic (37 percent), while 42 percent are non-Hispanic whites, and a much smaller minority are African American (7 percent).

Most citizens with Hispanic origin were born in the United States (60 percent), while the rest are immigrants. Two-thirds are either from Mexico or of Mexican descent, while others hail from the US territory of Puerto Rico, Cuba, or the Dominican Republic. Note that all Puerto Ricans are US citizens and can move to and from the US mainland without any special documentation requirements. More Hispanics come from Central America than from South America. Hispanics work in all professions but are found in agriculture, construction, and food service at higher rates than the country's non-Hispanic population.

The draw of opportunities and advantages has always pulled

people toward the United States. While many Latin American immigrants enter the United States legally, according to the US Department of Homeland Security's Office of Immigration Statistics, about 10.8 million undocumented immigrants were residing in the United States as of 2010; 62 percent are from Mexico (US Department of Homeland Security). This number is lower than it was in previous years, possibly because of the economic recession and higher-than-usual unemployment rates. The US-Mexican border is about 1,970 miles long and runs through an arid and open region between the two countries. It is difficult to control the illegal immigration across this border, as the attraction to American jobs is so compelling that people will risk death to cross the Southwest's deserts. According to 2010 estimates, undocumented workers make up about 5 percent of the United States' civilian workforce, including approximately 24 percent of the agricultural workforce.

The amount of remittances sent from undocumented workers in the United States to Mexico is estimated in the billions of dollars. The remittances from Mexican nationals living outside Mexico and sending money home to their families are Mexico's second-largest source of foreign income. Without remittances, many Mexican families would have a difficult time making ends meet.

African American Population

Most African Americans were concentrated in the South before the Civil War, where they worked as slaves in the cotton and tobacco plantations that supported the region. In some counties, blacks made up most of the population, which did not change when the war was over. Many of the newly freed slaves remained poor agricultural workers in the South well into the twentieth century. Even as late as 1910, seven out of every eight African Americans lived in the South.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as the industrialization of northern cities was accelerating, factory workers' increased need was primarily met by immigration from Europe, especially from southern and eastern Europe. However, when the First World War began (1914), European immigration began to slow down. European immigration then nearly ground to a halt in the 1920s as Americans set quotas to reduce the number of Eastern European immigrants. At that time, the Manufacturing Belt factories continued to need workers, but instead of European workers, they recruited African Americans from the South.

This led to a massive migration of blacks from the South to cities of the North and West. This migration was so significant to African Americans in the United States that it is called the Great Migration. Between 1910 and 1925, more than 10

percent of African Americans made the journey north and even more followed. Examining a map of the distribution of African Americans today shows the Great Migration legacy, as blacks live in many parts of the United States, both in the South and in postindustrial cities of the north and the Midwest. Blacks also now live in Sun Belt cities, as people of all races look for jobs related to the new information technologies and service industries.

Sanctuary Cities

There has been a lot of debate in the United States regarding sanctuary cities. Sanctuary cities are cities that choose not to cooperate with federal law enforcement to enforce immigration law. Instead, local government officials within sanctuary cities state they want to reduce deportation and family separation among undocumented people living within their cities. The hope is that undocumented people will, therefore, be willing to work with law enforcement officers to report crimes, use health and social services, and enroll their children in school.

In the United States, municipal policies include prohibiting police or city employees from questioning people about their immigration status and refusing requests by national immigration authorities to detain people beyond their release date if they were jailed for breaking local law.

Religion in the United States

Most early settlers to the United States were Protestant Christians: Puritans lived in New England, and Anglicans (later called Episcopalians) lived in Virginia. Roman Catholic immigrants settled in Maryland, and members of the Society of Friends (Quakers) founded Pennsylvania. Even within that overall picture, there was a great deal of religious diversity in the United States, and that diversity increased as new arrivals came from different countries with different religious backgrounds. The current pattern of religious affiliation in the United States remains relatively complex, and one can find observers of nearly every dominant religion, and many minor ones, in virtually every area of the country. That being said, there are clear patterns to the geography of religion in the United States that tell stories of immigration and migration history and stories about other aspects of American history.

The most striking feature of the map below is the block of red in the Southeast, in which Baptist churches are the leading church body. Although Baptist churches are the leading religious body in about 45 percent of all counties in the United States, most of those counties are found in the South. This region is considered the nation's Bible Belt, and it is a region in which churches are more likely than in other parts of the country to teach a literal interpretation of the Bible. Baptist churches grew in popularity in the South after the Civil War

as more liturgical denominations such as Methodists went into decline, and Baptist churches are popular among both African American and white residents.

Another interesting Protestant region is northern Appalachia and the lower Midwest from Ohio to Iowa and Kansas. As seen on the map, some of these counties are Baptist, in some of them, the strongest church presence is Methodist, and in others, it is Christian churches (Disciples of Christ and historically similar denominations) that prevail. The Methodist and other Christian areas were heavily influenced by the Second Great Awakening of the early nineteenth century, which promoted the theology that every person could be saved through revivals. The movement provided for strong showings of Protestant denominations that arose during that time. The third Protestant region is the northern Midwest and Great Plains: Minnesota, the Dakotas, and surrounding areas. This was the destination of German and Scandinavian Lutheran settlers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the leading denominations today in much of that area remain Lutheran.

The Roman Catholic Church, which is the leading religious body in 40 percent of US counties, is well represented in the Northeast, West, and Southwest. In the Northeast and Midwest, Catholic dominance points to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century immigration from Roman Catholic countries in Europe, such as Italy, Ireland, and Poland. Those

earlier Catholics have been joined more recently by large numbers of Hispanic immigrants. The dominance of Roman Catholics in the western United States, the Southwest, and even Florida in the Southeast are a reflection of the strong Hispanic presence in those parts of the country.

In the western United States, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon church or LDS) dominates a region including Utah and surrounding states. Utah was the destination of Mormon members as they migrated westward during the mid-nineteenth century.

Major urban centers are home to people who follow all the major religions of the world. Muslim populations are found in cities due to late-twentieth-century immigrants arriving from countries such as India, Pakistan, and places in the Middle East and moving to urban areas for employment. Detroit and its surrounding counties in southeastern Michigan are part of the country with a high concentration of Muslim immigrants.

Economic Development

To understand economic geography, all economic activities can be grouped into one of four categories, each with its respective terms, depending on the nature of what is being produced:

- Primary economic sector activities include everything that pertains to the collection of raw materials, such as agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining—in other words, growing and extracting activities.
- Secondary economic sector activities involve the processing of those raw materials through manufacturing, which has been the mainstay of economic growth for most developed countries.
- Tertiary economic sector activities are those that produce services, not physical products.
- Quaternary economic sector activities are those that deal with information collecting and processing, as well as management.

The tertiary and quaternary economic sectors are often thought of together as the service sector. In explaining how countries gain national income, only primary and secondary activities produce actual physical products, and manufacturing traditionally earns the highest value-added profits. Tertiary activities are selective in gaining national wealth. For example, service activities such as tourism can bring in national wealth if the visitors are from outside the country. Tourism within a country can also influence economic conditions by increasing the amount of consumer spending.

During the colonial era and into the nineteenth century, when most Americans lived on farms and worked in agriculture,

most economic activity in the United States took place within the primary economic sector. Today, the primary sector is still an essential component of the US economy, but far fewer people are employed. For example, less than 1 percent of Americans make their living by farming, but agricultural output has continued to grow because of advancements in mechanization and the development of high-tech seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides. The United States has been able to export surplus agricultural output to other parts of the world. Fewer people work in coal mines than in the past, but because of new mining technologies and mountaintop removal methods, coal production remains high.

The geographic distribution of primary activities depends on the location of natural features such as physical geography and climate and the market's location for a particular crop or resource. The nineteenth-century German economist Johann von Thünen created a model that predicted land use around a central market. In his theory, land closest to the market would produce crops that were expensive to transport, such as dairy. Land far from the market would be used to produce crops that were less expensive to transport and less perishable, such as grain. The von Thünen model predicts a series of concentric rings surrounding a central market, with each ring producing a different kind of crop. If the von Thünen model is applied at a much larger scale to the United States as a whole, with the densely populated urban zone from Boston to Washington,

DC (called a megalopolis), used as the central market, the model does a reasonably good job predicting the United States' agricultural land use. Dairy farms are found close to the market, grain farms are farther away, and ranch lands used for livestock production are even farther away.

Anything that involves the processing of raw materials, such as manufacturing, is a secondary activity. As the United States moved into the Industrial Revolution and the mid-twentieth century, the percentage of the US workforce involved in manufacturing grew from almost nothing until it peaked in the late 1970s. It was the main area of economic growth for decades. Although manufacturing was present in most country areas, it was focused in the northeastern United States and along the Great Lakes. Factories were close to the reserves of labor and the markets for manufactured products found in the densely populated Northeast. The steel industry was located in Pittsburgh and its environs because of its access to iron ore (mined in Minnesota and transported via the Great Lakes) and to coal (mined in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and other parts of Appalachia).

As manufacturing has grown in other parts of the world, the secondary economic sector has declined in the United States. US labor statistics indicate that the United States lost about five million manufacturing jobs between 2000 and 2010 (Nance-Nash, S.). Many of these jobs were lost to countries with lower labor costs, such as Mexico or China.

The third group of economic activities occurs in the tertiary and quaternary sectors, commonly known as the service sector. Tertiary and quaternary activities create services, not physical products. Service jobs include everything from engineering to finance, restaurants to sports, and childcare to medicine. The tertiary sector makes up more than three-quarters of the US economy, as measured by its share of the gross domestic product (GDP), which is the total value of all goods and services produced in a country in a given year. The GDP is then divided by the country's population to provide a GDP per capita statistic.

The United States has shifted to a postindustrial service economy. The rise of the information age in the latter part of the twentieth century shifted the workforce into the information sector. By the start of the twenty-first century, less than 2 percent of the US workforce was employed in agriculture, 15 percent in industry, and the rest in services (18 percent) and information activities (65 percent).

The locations of service-sector jobs are much more flexible than are jobs in the primary or secondary sectors. They are called footloose jobs: an accountant can live in New York or Denver, whereas it is much more difficult for factories to move from one place to another and farms cannot relocate. Many of the information-technology jobs are emerging in the United States' southern regions, called the Sun Belt. The warmer climate, combined with a lower cost of living and less

congestion, makes the Sun Belt an attractive location for emerging information-based companies. Note that the South and West's popularity for service-sector jobs only came about after the invention and adoption of air-conditioning. Air-conditioning was not widespread until after the Second World War in the 1950s.

While the population of the Southern states has increased, the population of some Northern states has decreased. The Sun Belt has always been a destination for people escaping the harsh winters of the Northern states. This has usually been only a seasonal transition. However, the new trend is one of continual growth because of increased information technologies and the service industry. Emerging companies looking to establish their businesses have targeted major cities from the Carolinas to the Southwest.

9.7 SUMMARY

The United States and Canada are two countries with a great deal in common: their extensive territories, their histories of European colonization, their immigrant populations, and their high standards of living.

Both the United States and Canada are becoming less European as immigrants arrive from outside Europe. In the case of the United States, the largest group of immigrants is from Latin America. For Canada, the largest group of immigrants is from Asia.

The United States and Canada are both countries with a small native population. However, in Canada, native people have achieved more self-representation than in the United States, especially since Nunavut's creation.

Quebec, the French-speaking heart of Canada, has struggled for years to maintain its cultural uniqueness without risking its economic well-being.

Both countries are postindustrial, with service- and information-oriented economies. The United States is the

world's largest economy, and it has a history of spreading its culture, ideas, and military prowess around the globe.

North America is made up of various regions with distinct cultural or physical features. Each region has a majority and minority population, based on immigration or native heritage. Economic conditions vary from region to region, with the Sun Belt attracting an ever-growing number of information-based high-tech firms.

9.8 ATTRIBUTIONS AND REFERENCES

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PART X

EUROPE

10.1 IDENTIFYING THE REGION

Europe is a continent of peninsulas, islands, and varied landforms. The European continent's traditional boundaries include the North Atlantic Ocean to the west and Russia up to the Ural Mountains to the east. Since the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, Russia has been given its own identity and, in this text, is not included in Europe's study. Russia will be holistically discussed in Chapter 3. Greenland is located next to Canada's North American country but has traditionally been considered a part of Europe because of Denmark's colonial acquisition of the island. Greenland is physically more a part of North America. The Arctic Ocean creates a natural boundary to the north. Europe's southern boundary is the Mediterranean Sea and includes Malta and Cyprus' islands as independent countries. Turkey is in Europe, but Turkey is considered a part of Asia Minor and is usually included in the Middle East. The waterway in Turkey between the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea is the Bosphorus, or the Istanbul Strait, which creates a natural border between Asia and Europe. Europe is also close to North Africa, and Morocco's coast can be seen across the Strait of Gibraltar from Spain.

10.2 PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE REGION

From the Roman Empire to the European Union (EU), Europe's historical development pattern is a regional geography model study. From historic empires to diverse nation-states to a multi-country union, the continent struggles to confront the cultural forces that unite and divide it. The powerful impact European colonialism has had on the world since the Industrial Revolution is still felt today. The rural-to-urban shift prompted by the Industrial Revolution first impacted Europe and continues to affect emerging countries. Understanding the geographic region of Europe is essential to understanding our world. This summary of the basic concepts will provide a valuable lesson in globalization, which affects every human being on the planet. The ideas and principles that apply to Europe can also apply to other countries and regions.

Location and Climate

Europe is a northern continent. All the British Isles, for example, fall above the fiftieth parallel. If we compare Europe's position on a globe with that of the contiguous United States, we see that much of Europe lies north of the United States. Paris, France, is at about the same latitude as Fargo, North Dakota. Athens, Greece, is at about the same latitude as St. Louis, Missouri. Europe's northern position affects its growing seasons and people's moods, and it should be taken into consideration as an essential influence in the evolution of the European character. Bodies of water also surround Europe:

- The Atlantic Ocean borders Europe on the west.
- The Arctic Ocean borders Europe to the north.
- Many seas surround the various peninsulas and coastal regions.

The oceans exert a significant influence on the world's climates. The oceans collect and store vast amounts of solar energy, particularly around the equator, and transport that heat with their currents. Ocean currents can move water for thousands of miles from one temperature zone to another. Because oceans can absorb so much heat, maritime climates are often milder than continental ones, with smaller temperature variations from day to night and winter to summer. This

influences temperature and precipitation patterns over vast regions of Europe and the rest of the world. Water moderates coastal environments in several ways. The water heats and cools more slowly than land. This heat inertia allows coastal communities to have climates that tend to be more moderate than one might imagine for places so far north. Interior Europe does not benefit from coastal waters and can have winters as cold as those found within the upper midwestern United States.

The Gulf Stream is perhaps the most critical current for Western Europe's climate and is responsible for producing a temperate climate for a northern latitude location. Most of Western Europe has a moderate type C climate. The Gulf Stream originates in the Gulf of Mexico, where the waters are warmed. This powerful current follows the Eastern Seaboard of the United States before crossing the Atlantic Ocean for Europe. The Gulf Stream's most dramatic effect can be found in the western coastal islands of Scotland. These coastal islands have a mild enough climate to support tropical flora forms, even though it is a latitude degree north of Hudson Bay, Canada.

The coast of Norway provides another example. While most of Norway's coastal area lies within the Arctic region, it remains free of ice and snow throughout the winter. People living farther inland and closer to Eastern Europe and Russia encounter the colder type D climates. Colder air sweeps down

from the Arctic north or eastern Siberia and provides colder winters in this eastern region. The Mediterranean Sea moderates the temperature to the south, providing a type C climate around its shores. Type C climates meet up with type E climates near the Arctic Circle in Norway and Iceland.

Four Main European Landforms

Europe has four prominent landforms, many islands and peninsulas, and various climate types. The four prominent landforms include the Alpine region, Central Uplands, Northern Lowlands, and Western Highlands. These diverse landforms provide Europe with an abundance of biodiversity. Biodiversity refers to the diversity of the number of species in an ecosystem and the number of members in each species. The physical environment also provides natural resources and raw materials for human activities. Europe's moderate climates and favorable relative location are supported by its access to the many rivers and seas. These advantageous developmental factors supported the development of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, giving rise to highly technical and urban societies. Europe has emerged as one of the core economic centers of the global economy. With Europe's urbanization, high human population densities have placed a strain on the natural

environment. As a result, there has been significant deforestation and the loss of natural habitat, which has, in turn, has decreased the realm's level of biodiversity.

Rivers are abundant in Europe and have provided adequate transportation for travel and trade throughout its history. Most of Europe is accessible by water transport either via the many rivers or along the peninsulas and islands' extensive coastlines. Two main rivers divide Europe: the Danube and the Rhine. Both have their origins in the region of southern Germany on or near the border with Switzerland. The Rhine River flows north and empties into the North Sea in Rotterdam, Holland, one of the world's busiest ports. The Danube flows east through various major European cities, such as Vienna, Budapest, and Belgrade, before emptying into the Black Sea.

Alpine Region

The High Alps, which range from eastern France to Slovenia, are central to the Alpine region. Included in the Alpine Range are the Pyrenees, located on the border between France and Spain; the Apennines, running Italy's length; the Carpathians, looping around Romania from Slovakia; and finally, the shorter Dinaric Alps in former Yugoslavia. Mountains usually provide minerals and ores placed there when the earth's internal processes created the mountains.

Mountains also isolate people by acting as a dividing range that can separate people into cultural groups.

The Alpine region encircles the Mediterranean coastlines, which have more temperate type C climates that are unusually warm with hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters. This climate type allows for the cultivation of food products such as olives, citrus fruit, figs, apricots, and grapes. Evergreen scrub oaks and other drought-resistant shrubs are common in the Mediterranean region.

The Central Uplands

The region bordering the Alps to the north, which includes a large portion of southern Germany extending eastward, is known as the Central Uplands. These foothills to the Alps are excellent sources of raw materials such as forest products and coal, which are valuable resources for industrial activities. The Central Uplands are also good locations for dairy farming and cattle raising. This middle portion of the continent has a mixed deciduous-coniferous forest, and the vegetation includes oak, elm, and maple trees intermingled with pine and fir trees. There are four distinct seasons in this region with moderate amounts of precipitation year-round.

Northern Lowlands

Similar to the breadbasket of the midwestern United States, Europe's Northern Lowlands possess excellent farmland. Primary agricultural operations here provide for a large European population. The land is flat to rolling with relatively good soils. The Northern Lowlands is a vast plain that extends across northern Europe from southern France, north through Germany, and then to the Ural Mountains of Russia. This area is typified by prairies and areas of tall grasses and is mostly used as farmland. The lowlands area also contains bogs, heaths, and lakes. A steppe biome characterizes the eastern part of this vast plain around Ukraine. It is a flat and relatively dry region with short grasses and is generally an agricultural region. This eastern area has large swings in temperature, both from day to night and from summer to winter. Winter temperatures in the eastern steppe can drop to below -40°F , with summer temperatures reaching as high as 105°F . This is similar to the steppes of eastern Montana or western North Dakota in the United States.

Western Highlands

On the western edges of the European continent arise small, rugged mountains called highlands that extend throughout Norway, parts of Britain, and portions of the Iberian Peninsula of Portugal and Spain. These Western Highlands

hold sparser populations and are less attractive to large farming operations. Agriculture is usually limited to grazing livestock or farming in the valleys and meadows. The Scottish Highlands are noted for their wool products and Highland cattle. In England, the central chain of highlands called the Pennines proved valuable during the Industrial Revolution because they enabled hydropower and coal mining. Coal mining was prominent in the highland regions of Wales. In the far northern regions of Scandinavia, tundra environments prevail. In this coldest and driest biome, permafrost dominates the landscape, and the land becomes soggy for brief periods during the few weeks of summer. The flora consists primarily of lichens, mosses, low shrubs, and wildflowers.

Natural Resources in Europe

Europe's physical landforms provide a diversity of geographic opportunities that have catapulted Europe through the Industrial Revolution and into the information age. With an abundance of natural resources, European countries have gained wealth from the land and leveraged their geographic location to develop a powerhouse of economic activity for the global marketplace. Europe has placed a strong focus on manufacturing activity to take advantage of its natural resources. The highly urbanized society has struggled to find a balance between modernization and environmental concerns.

Industrial activities have contributed to the degradation of the environment and the demise of many species.

Different regions of Europe are blessed with freshwater supplies, good soils, and various minerals. Chief among the mineral deposits in Europe is iron ore, which can be found in Sweden, France, and Ukraine. Other minerals exist in smaller quantities, including copper, lead, bauxite, manganese, nickel, gold, silver, potash, clay, gypsum, dolomite, and salt. Extraction activities have supported the continent's industrialization.

The ready access to vast areas of the Atlantic Ocean and several major seas, lakes, and rivers has elevated fish to an essential natural resource in Europe. The seas around Europe provide about 10 percent of the world's fish catches. Mirroring the situation around the world, European fishing activity increased as the population increased. Europeans are becoming increasingly aware of the effects of overfishing. Stocks of Atlantic cod and Atlantic mackerel are considered to be at risk because of the twin threats of overfishing and changes in the environment that affect natural mortality and slowing spawning. Stocks of eastern North Atlantic bluefin tuna are also attracting attention for the same reason. Other species of fish in the North Atlantic and the Baltic Sea are considered overexploited. Changes to the fishery are a significant concern for strictly environmental and ecological

reasons and because fish comprise such a substantial portion of the European economy.

With the EU's formation, Europe's countries began to work toward shared research and policies concerning the fishery. The Common Fisheries Policy was drafted and included strict and extensive rules and guidelines for fishing, particularly of cod. The rules are so strict and thus so controversial that Norway and Iceland decided to opt-out of the EU rather than agree to abide by these rules. The effect of these rules is incompletely known, but the cod stocks in the North Sea do not seem to be rebounding as quickly or substantially as expected.

Forest covers more than 40 percent of the continent's land area, with the majority on the Russian side. Forests exist primarily in the less populated Nordic and Baltic countries and Central Europe. About half the forest land in Europe is privately owned. Interestingly, there are several different forms of private ownership, including extensive family holdings, holdings by forest industries, and small to minimal holdings by thousands of individuals. Most of the forested land is managed, and about 85 percent of the forests produce exploitable resources. The percentage of forested land in Europe is rebounding because of an extensive tree-planting initiative since 2000. Pollution has caused great harm to the forests of Poland, the Czech Republic, and eastern Germany, and acid rain and air pollution have seriously harmed forests

such as the Black Forest of southern Germany, which has also experienced substantial logging activity.

Soil resources are of critical importance. Soil is necessary for growing food, supporting livestock, supporting other natural resources such as the forests, and supplying groundwater. Soil resources are only just beginning to receive attention in Europe. Problems to be addressed include loss of topsoil from development and building activities, older-style agricultural practices, mining, contamination from industries and other sources, and acidification due to acid rain.

Coal, now substantially depleted, is abundant in Great Britain, including some offshore areas and Germany and Ukraine's industrial centers. Other coals deposits are found in Belgium, France, Spain, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, and Russia. The burning of coal has produced high levels of air pollution. Acid rain has been a significant concern in the northern countries, where wind currents carry pollutants north into Scandinavia from Central Europe's industrial regions. In Scandinavia, acid rain has diminished fish populations in many of the lakes. Forest health is also being challenged, diminishing regions' economic conditions that depend on forests for their economic survival.

Petroleum and natural gas deposits exist underneath the North Sea and were first tapped in the 1970s. Five European countries have rights to these resources, including Norway, the

United Kingdom, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Germany, with Norway holding the bulk of the rights. The governments of these five nations agree that half the North Sea oil reserves have been consumed although tapped only decades ago.

Before the extraction of petroleum products from the North Sea, Russia and the former Soviet Union's other republics supplied petroleum to Europe. These areas still have several active extraction operations. Hydroelectric power has been essential in Europe. With both coal and oil resources largely depleted and the desire to avoid the environmental damage caused by dams, the European Energy Commission is devoting substantial energy and resources to encouraging the use of renewable resources such as wind and solar energy. In March 2007, European leaders agreed that a binding target of 20 percent of all energy must be from alternative sources by 2020. Also, 10 percent of the transportation fuels used by EU members must be sustainable biofuels.

10.3 HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE REGION

Europe did not become a center for world economies with high standards of living by accident. Historical events in global development have favored this realm because of its physical geography and cultural factors. In southern Europe, the Greeks provided ideas, philosophy, and organization. Greek thinkers promoted the concept of democracy. The Romans carried the concept of the empire to new levels. From about 150 BCE to 475 CE, the Romans brought many ideas together and controlled a large portion of Europe and North Africa. The Roman Empire introduced a common infrastructure to Europe by building and connecting their roads, bridges, aqueducts, and port facilities. They also understood how to rule an empire by taking advantage of the best opportunities of each region they controlled. The Romans encouraged the best and most skilled artisans to focus on what they did best. This created the specialization of goods and a market economy. No longer did everyone have to make everything for themselves. They could sell what they produced and purchase products created by others, which would be of higher quality than what

they could make at home. Regions that specialized in specific goods due to local resources or specialty skills could transport those goods to markets long distances away. The Roman Empire also connected southern Europe and North Africa.

The Vikings

The Vikings of Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden, and Denmark; 900–1200 CE) are often inaccurately referred to as rogue bands of armed warriors who pillaged and plundered northern Europe. Though they were fierce warriors in battle, they were experienced farmers, skilled craftsmen, and active traders with trade routes throughout the north. Using their maritime knowledge and skills, the Vikings used Europe's waterways for transportation. They were some of the earliest colonizers with colonies ranging from modern-day Russia, Iceland, Greenland, and Canada. Their longships were renowned for versatility and provided an advantage on the sea. This allowed the Vikings to make profound advances deep into Europe – all the way to Constantinople. History indicates that the Byzantine Empire employed Scandinavian Vikings as mercenaries.

In a general sense, the regions to the west of Scandinavia, such as Iceland, Scotland, Ireland, and Greenland, were targeted by the Norwegian Vikings. Southern regions such as England and France were more often destinations of the Danish Vikings.

Russia and areas of Eastern Europe were common trading grounds for the Swedish Vikings, though the different Viking groups could occasionally be found in the same destinations. The present-day Scandinavian countries were established after the main Viking period. The Vikings connected northern Europe with trade during the Dark Ages.

Colonialism

It was not until after the Dark Ages of Europe ended that a rebirth of ideas, technology, and progress took hold. The Renaissance of the late fifteenth century prompted activity in Europe that changed the world. In 1492, Columbus and his three ships crossed the Atlantic to land on the Americas' shores. This event symbolized the beginning of European colonialism, which only diminished after World War II. Colonialism's effects remain in the colonies or protectorates that European countries still possess. Colonialism was fueled by mercantilism's economic concept that included governments' drive to control trade, promoting the acquisition of wealth by the quick gain of gold or silver from their colonies.

Colonialism included the development of colonies outside the home country, usually for the expansion of imperial power and the exploitation of human (slavery) and natural resources. The building of larger ships and understanding sea travel allowed

an exchange of new goods and ideas between continents. North and South America were opened up to the European explorers for colonial expansion. European colonialism brought newfound wealth from the colonies back to Europe. All the regions of the world outside Europe were targeted for colonialism. Africa was divided up, “Latin” America was created, and Asia became a target for resources and trade. The few powerful countries along the Atlantic coast of Europe began the drive to dominate their world. If you live in the Western Hemisphere, consider the language you speak and your country’s borders: both were most likely products of European colonialism. Most of the current political, geographic boundaries were drawn up or shaped through colonial conflict or agreement.

The Agrarian Revolution

The post-Renaissance era introduced many agricultural changes that impacted European food production. Before this time, most agricultural methods were primitive and labor-intensive, but new technologies were introduced that greatly enhanced agricultural production. Plows, seeders, and harvesting technologies were introduced, and land reform and land ownership transitioned to adapt to the changing times. These innovations supported the expanding port cities that created urban markets for agricultural surpluses. Colonial

ships returned from the colonies with new crops such as the potato that revolutionized crop production. This era's progress in agrarian advancements is often referred to as the agrarian revolution. The agrarian revolution led to industrial developments such as the steam tractor and steel implements that further advanced agricultural production worldwide.

The Industrial Revolution

Being an island country, Great Britain developed the world's largest navy and controlled the seas. Their colonial reach extended from what is now Canada to Australia. The Industrial Revolution, initiated in northern England in the late 1700s, introduced an industrial period that changed how humans produced products. The shift to coal for energy, the steam engine for power, the smelting of iron, and the concept of mass production changed how goods were produced.

The development of the steam-powered engine provided a mobile power source. Waterwheels powered by steep-flowing rivers or streams were an early source of power. With coal for fuel and steam for power, the industry engines were mobile and moved full speed. Power looms converted textiles such as cotton and wool into cloth. Powered by a steam engine, a power loom could operate twenty-four hours a day and could be located anywhere. Industrialization with cheap labor and

adequate raw materials brought enormous wealth to the industrial leaders and their home countries.

With the mass production of goods and advancements in technology, there was a significant shift in human labor. Fewer people were needed on the farms, and more workers were needed in factories. There was a sizeable rural-to-urban shift in the human population. Europe experienced the development of the major cities of its realm during this period. In Britain in 1800, for example, only 9 percent of the population lived in urban areas. By 1900, some 62 percent were urban dwellers. As of 2010, over 90 percent of Britains live in urban areas, compared to 75 percent urban for the whole of Europe.

The rural-to-urban shift that began with the Industrial Revolution in Europe continues today in developing countries. The Industrial Revolution, which started in northern England's Pennine mountain chain, rippled through Europe and across the Atlantic to the United States. The majority of countries in Europe are currently in stage 5 of the index of economic development. The five stages of the Economic Development Index illustrate a pattern of development and population dynamics for a country or region. The model outlines how rural societies with an agrarian economy in Stage 1 can transition to Stage 5: the stage that indicates an urban society with a consumer economy. As a general trend, when a country's industrial activity levels and

urban growth rise, the outcome is usually a higher standard of living and smaller family sizes.

Additionally, the rural-to-urban shift occurs, driven by the pull of opportunities and advantages in the industrializing and urbanizing areas. Countries in stage 5 of the index have small families with a fertility rate below the replacement level. Their incomes, based on a consumer economy, are generally at high levels.

As Europe industrialized and progressed through the Index of Economic Development stages, certain core regions reached the postindustrial stages earlier than others. Western Europe established a core industrial region with an extended periphery. The postindustrial activity in this core area continues today in four main centers of innovation: (1) Stuttgart in southern Germany, (2) Lyon in southeastern France, (3) Milan in northern Italy, and (4) Barcelona in northeastern Spain. These four industrial centers have been referred to by some as the Four Motors of Europe because they promote the European community's business and industry. The European core region extends as far as Stockholm in the north to Barcelona in the south.

Central Business Districts and Primate Cities

European urban development centered on port cities that had industrial activity. Ships could import raw materials, the factories could manufacture the goods, and the ships could export them. A central business district (CBD) developed around these activities. Since walking was the primary transportation mode, all business activities had to move in the same vicinity. Banks, retail shops, food markets, and residential dwellings had to be close to the factories and port facilities. Modern cities emerged from this industrialization process, and Europe is one of the more urban realms on the planet.

Many European countries have one central primate city. The term primate city indicates a city that is more than twice as large as their second city and exceptionally expressive of national feeling and heritage. One may instinctively think that the primate city is the same as the capital city of a country; this, however, is not always the case. For example, Washington, DC, is the US capital, but New York City is the country's primate city. Primate cities represent a country's persona and often are symbolic of the country's heritage and character. Though common, not all countries of the world have a primate city. Financial and business centers in cities such as London, Rome, or Paris support the industrial activity that led to their

development as primate cities. Most primate cities are ports or are located on a major river.

Rural-to-Urban Shift and Population Growth

Consider the trend that the Industrial Revolution brought to Europe. Recall the population growth principle, which states that as countries industrialize and urbanize, family size naturally goes down, and incomes traditionally go up. Integrate this with the rural-to-urban shift that occurs when countries progress through the five stages of economic development index. Understanding these underlying trends can determine the average family size in Europe and why it is declining.

Because Europe is an urbanized realm, one can understand why family size in Europe is small. Various countries in Europe have negative population growth rates. Family size in Spain and Italy is around 1.2, with the average family size in all of Europe at 1.4 children. The replacement rate to maintain an even population-growth pattern would be a fertility rate of about 2.1 children. Small families do not provide enough young people to cover the available entry-level service jobs. Europe, the United States, and Japan are all in stage 5 of the index of economic development and are facing low or negative

population growth and a deficit in their cheap labor supply. As a core economic global power, Europe has experienced an increase in immigration. With a lower fertility rate and an increase in postindustrial activity, Europe is a magnet for people from poorer peripheral countries and even peripheral regions within Europe looking for opportunities and advantages.

With the planet's human population increasing overall, one might think that smaller family size is a positive trend. It may be, but there are problems along the way. If fewer young people in a community—fewer children and fewer people of employment age—consider how this affects the economic situation. With a declining European population, who will apply for the entry-level jobs? Economic core areas attract immigrants seeking opportunities and advantages. Europe follows this pattern. There has been increasing tension between the long-standing European cultural groups and immigrants from developing countries who often speak non-European languages or follow religions other than Christianity. Immigrants from North Africa or the Middle East are Islam, the fastest-growing religion in Europe.

Declining Family Size in Europe

There are six main reasons for the declining family size in Europe:

- The high cost of living makes supporting a large family expensive.
- Confined living spaces in urban areas are expensive for larger families.
- Young people are naturally putting off marriage and family until they are older.
- Family planning and health care for women is available.
- More people are earning an education and putting off having children.
- More women choose professional careers and have fewer children.

The following problems arise with the decline in family size in Europe:

- Fewer children result in a shrinking workforce for entry-level jobs.
- The workforce is getting older, and more professionals are retiring.
- Pension costs are increasing, and there are fewer younger workers to pay for them.

- The tax burden is shifting to fewer younger professionals in the workplace.
- More revenues are needed to pay for the health care of a larger population of senior citizens.
- Immigrants seeking employment may not share the same cultural heritage or values.

Nation-States and Devolution

The agrarian revolution and the Industrial Revolution were powerful movements that altered human activity in many ways. Innovations in food production and the manufacturing of products transformed Europe, which impacted the rest of the world. Even before the agrarian revolution was underway, other transitions in European political currents were undermining the established empire mentality fueled by warfare and territorial disputes.

The political revolution that transformed Europe resulted from several actions that focused on ending continual warfare to control territory and introduce peaceful agreements that recognized the sovereignty of territory ruled by representative government structures. Various treaties and revolutions continued to shift the power from dictators and monarchs to the general populace. The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 and those that followed helped establish a sense of peace and stability for Central Europe, which had been dominated by the

Holy Roman Theseers. The Holy Roman Empire, centered on Central Europe's German states from 962–1806, should not be confused with the Roman Empire, which was based in Rome and ended centuries earlier. The French Revolution (1789–95) was an example of Europe's political transformation to establish democratic processes for governance.

The political revolution laid the groundwork for a sense of nationalism that transformed Europe into nation-states. The term nation refers to a homogeneous group of people with a common heritage, language, religion, or political ambition. The term state refers to the government; for example, the United States has a State Department with a state secretary. When nations and states come together, there is a true nation-state, wherein most citizens share a common heritage and a united government.

European countries have progressed to the point where the concept of forming or remaining a nation-state is a driving force in many political sectors. To state it plainly, most Europeans want to be a nation-state member, where everyone is alike and shares the same culture, heritage, and government. The drive for nation-states in Europe is in Italy for Italians, a united Germany for Germans, and a France for the French, for example. The truth is that this ideal goal is challenging to come by. Though many European countries' political borders

resemble nation-states, there is too much diversity within the nations to create an ideal nation-state truly.

Various ethnic populations in Europe desire their nation-state within their countries of residence. They want to devolve or separate from the more significant state. The term devolution refers to the process whereby regions or people within a state demand independence and autonomy at the central government's expense. There are now several cases where devolution is occurring in Europe. For example, Scotland and Wales seek to devolve from the United Kingdom. The Basque region between Spain and France would like to have its nation-state. The former Yugoslavia broke up into seven smaller nation-states. Various other minority groups in Europe seek similar arrangements. Thus both cohesive cultural forces and divisive cultural forces are active in the European community.

Centrifugal and Centripetal Forces

Cultural forces continually apply pressure on a country. Some of these cultural forces pull the nation together, called centripetal forces, and others pull it apart, called centrifugal forces. Primary sources of these cultural

forces include religion, language, ethnicity, politics, and economic conditions.

Centrifugal Forces Divide a State

- Ethnic conflict
- Social injustice
- Poverty
- Dictatorial leadership
- Religious intolerance
- Nationalism
- Loss of rights
- Any other divisive forces

Centripetal Forces Hold a State Together

- Ethnic Unity and Tolerance
- Social/Economic Equity
- Just and fair legal systems
- Religious acceptance
- Common heritage
- Common language
- Any other unifying force

When there is division, conflict, or confrontation, centrifugal forces are at play. When unification, agreement, or nationalism are being exercised, centripetal forces are evident. The sources that tie a country together can also be the sources that divide

a country. Ethnic unity can be a positive force, while ethnic division and conflict can be a divisive force. If centrifugal forces become strong, the result may be an outright civil war, as was seen in the United States in the 1860s. Unity can also be evident through national struggles, such as the nationalism displayed immediately after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States. After the attacks, an outpouring of goodwill and agreement strengthened the bonds within the United States.

To understand our world, it is helpful to understand the active cultural forces in any one location. Disagreement, inequity, or injustice related to the cultural factors of ethnicity, religion, language, and economics of a region or country cause most conflicts. The strong personalities that provide leadership can similarly prove powerful forces that either divide or unite a nation. An example of cultural forces in afterward in Europe can be found in Northern Ireland, where political forces use religious differences as a means of social division.

Religion and Language in Europe

Europe has historically been considered a Christian realm. The three main branches of Christianity in Europe are Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Eastern Orthodox. Rome has been

the geographical base for the Roman Catholic Church since the Roman Empire. Operating on the Romance language, Latin, the Catholic Church has provided southern Europe with a common religion for over 1,500 years.

The Roman Catholic Church split when Constantinople, now called Istanbul, gained preeminence. The Eastern Orthodox Church launched itself as the primary organization in Eastern Europe and Russia's Slavic lands. The reformation of the fourteenth century, led by people such as Martin Luther, brought about the Protestant Reformation and a break with the Roman Catholic Church. Protestant churches have dominated northern Europe to this day.

Three main Indo-European language groups dominate Europe. Though there are additional language groups, the dominant three coincide with the three main religious divisions. In the east, where the Eastern Orthodox Church is dominant, the Slavic language group prevails. In the north, along with Protestant Christianity, one finds the Germanic language group. In southern Europe, where Roman Catholicism is dominant, the Romance languages are more commonly spoken.

European Union

Centuries of fighting and the end of two world wars created

an international desire to unify Europe. First, the concept of nation-states, and a desire by European nations to recognize the sovereignty of states ruled by representative governments. Many European countries have progressed to a point where the concept of forming or empowering nation-states has helped influence the creation of the European Union.

In 1921, Luxembourg and Belgium signed the Convention of Brussels, creating the Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union. Following World War II, the union included the Netherlands. In 1944, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg established the Benelux Agreement, a politico-economic union of the three neighboring states in western Europe.

Following World War II, the United States implemented the Marshall Plan (named after Secretary of State, George Marshall) to rebuild war-torn Europe with American aid. Shortly afterward, the Treaty of Rome agreement (1957-1993) was signed to provide the economic structure necessary to rebuild Europe following the war. Over time, several other treaties replaced Rome's Treaty, leading to the European Union (EU) in 1993.

The European Union is considered to be a supranationalistic political and economic system. Supranationalism is the voluntary association of three or more independent nation-states, willing to yield some sovereignty measure for a mutual benefit. As noted by the EU, their stated goals are:

- Promote peace, its values, and the well-being of its citizens.
- Offer freedom, security, and justice without internal borders.
- Sustainable development based on balanced economic growth and price stability, a highly competitive market economy with full employment and social progress, and environmental protection.
- Combat social exclusion and discrimination.
- Promote scientific, technological progress.
- Enhance economic, social, and territorial cohesion and solidarity among EU countries.
- Respect its rich culture and linguistic diversity.
- Establish an economic and monetary union whose currency is the euro.

The EU values are common to the EU countries in a society where inclusion, tolerance, justice, solidarity, and non-discrimination prevail. These values are an integral part of our European way of life:

- Human dignity is inviolable. It must be respected, protected, and constitutes the fundamental basis of fundamental rights.
- Freedom of movement gives citizens the right to move and reside freely within the Union. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights protects individual liberties, such as

respect for private life, freedom of thought, religion, assembly, expression, and information.

- The functioning of the EU is founded on representative democracy. Being a European citizen also means enjoying political rights. Every adult EU citizen has the right to stand as a candidate and vote in elections to the European Parliament. EU citizens have the right to stand as candidates and vote in their country of residence or origin.
- Equality is about equal rights for all citizens before the law. The principle of equality between women and men underpins all European policies and is the basis for European integration. It applies to all areas. The principle of equal pay for equal work became part of the Treaty of Rome in 1957. Although inequalities still exist, the EU has made significant progress.
- The EU is based on the rule of law. Everything the EU does is founded on treaties, voluntarily and democratically agreed by its EU countries. An independent judiciary upholds law and justice. The EU countries gave final jurisdiction to the European Court of Justice, which all judgments have to be respected.
- The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights protects human rights. These cover the right to be free from discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, the right to protect your data, and the right to get access to

justice.

As with most nation-states, the dynamics of centripetal and centrifugal forces are at play with the European Union. However, those tensions have recently increased, causing some nation-states to reconsider the EU's need and purpose. Those tensions include international migration issues into the EU, regional movement within the EU, changing the diversity of nation-states, economics, distrust in the EU's political government, and more.

Brexit

The most visible example of the European Union tensions is currently in the United Kingdom (UK). On June 23, 2016, the UK citizens voted to be the first nation-state to leave the EU.

10.4 REGIONS OF WESTERN EUROPE

Europe has been traditionally divided into regions based on location according to the compass's four points: Eastern Europe, southern Europe, Western Europe, and northern Europe. The British Isles are often considered a separate region but can be included as a part of Western Europe. These regions are purely geographical regions that may share similar physical geography or cultural traits.

The traditional regions of Europe are not as relevant today as they have been historical with the creation of the European Union (EU). Economic and political relationships are more integrated than past eras when nation-states and empires were more significant. Economic conditions have often superseded cultural factors and have intensified the need for increased integration. Cultural forces have traditionally supported nationalistic movements that preserve a people's culture, heritage, and traditions. Regional cultural differences remain the social fabric of local communities that support the retention of their identity. Modern transportation and communication technology has brought this collection of

European identities into one single sphere of global recognition.

Northern Europe

Europe has many different cultural identities within its continent. Northern Europe has traditionally included Iceland, Finland, and the three Scandinavian countries of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. These countries are often referred to as the Nordic countries and were influenced by Viking heritage and expansion. Their capital cities are also major ports, and the largest cities of each country are their primate cities. The languages of the three Scandinavian countries are from the Germanic language group and are mutually intelligible. Finnish is not an Indo-European language but is instead from the Uralic language family. Most of Iceland's inhabitants are descendants of Scandinavian Vikings. Protestant Christianity has prevailed in northern Europe since about 1000 CE. The Lutheran Church has traditionally been the state church until recent years. These countries were kingdoms, and their royal families remain highly regarded members of society. The colder northern climate has helped shape the cultural activities and the winter sports that are part of its heritage. Peripheral isolation from the rest of Europe because of their northern location and dividing

water bodies has allowed the northern culture to be preserved for centuries and shape the societies in northern Europe.

Human rights, education, and social concerns are high priorities of northern Europe's governments, and the quality of these elements rank highly based on the annual World Happiness Report. Standards of living are among the highest in Europe. Isolation in northern Europe does create an element of economic cost, and transportation technology has been leveraged to address this. A modern bridge has been constructed across the Baltic Sea from Denmark to Sweden to increase the flow of people, goods, and materials between the Scandinavian Peninsula and mainland Europe. Iceland is the most remote of the Nordic countries. Its small population of less than half-million people is connected to Europe by sea and air transportation and communication technologies. Almost all elementary school children in the Nordic countries are taught English as a second language. The Nordic Diet consists of fish, meat, and potatoes are traditional dietary staples. The cuisine of the region is not noted for being spicy. Northern Europe has worked diligently to integrate itself with the global community and yet maintain its cultural identity.

As a standard practice, the northern European countries have exploited their natural resources' opportunities and advantages to expand their economies. Sweden, northern Europe's largest country, has used its natural iron ore supply to develop its manufacturing sector. Sweden was the production

base of Saab and Volvo vehicles and other high-tech products; however, GM purchased the Saab auto division in 2000, and some of its automobiles were manufactured in Mexico. In 2010, Saab was sold back to European investors, and production resumed in Sweden. Ford Motor Corporation purchased Volvo Car Corporation in 1999 and was then acquired by a Chinese automaker in 2010. Finland has vast timber resources and is one of Europe's significant sources of processed lumber. It was the original manufacturer of Nokia cell phones, an example of its technological advancements. Nokia is the largest manufacturer of mobile phones globally and has production facilities in eight different countries.

Norway has been benefiting from the enormous oil and natural gas reserves under the North Sea. Fishing and modest agricultural activities had been Norway's traditional means of gaining wealth, but now it is exporting the much-in-demand energy resources. Because of its economic and energy independence, Norway has opted not to join the EU.

Vikings were masters of the seas and colonized Greenland, located next to Canada, and is considered the world's largest island. Danish colonization included Greenland and the Faeroe Islands, located between Scotland and Iceland in the eighteenth century. Both are now under Denmark's government but retain a high level of self-rule and autonomy, which has helped them hold on to their cultural identity. Greenland has also opted not to become a part of the EU

even though Denmark is a member. Greenland only had a population of roughly 56,600 in 2019, and 80 percent of its surface is covered with ice. Fish is Greenland's main export, but minerals, diamonds, and gold are also present in viable amounts.

Denmark has a consumer economy with a high standard of living. This Scandinavian country is often ranked as the least corrupt country globally and has the happiest people. The country has supported a positive environment and implemented strong measures to protect its natural areas. Denmark's main exports are food products and energy. The country has sizeable oil resources in the North Sea and receives over 15 percent of its electricity from wind turbines.

The Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia have often been included in the northern European designation because of their northern location. Estonia has the strongest similarities in religion, traditions, culture, and geographic literature has often included it as a part of northern Europe. The Baltic states have been associated with Eastern Europe through the Soviet era but, like their neighbors to the north, are becoming more economically integrated with Western Europe.

Northern Europe is a peripheral region. Southern Sweden has an advanced industrial base and resembles a core area. Sweden's northern portion and the other Nordic countries'

main parts act as sources of raw materials for Europe's urban core industrial region. In the core-peripheral spatial relationship, northern Europe resembles a semi-peripheral region with both the urban core and the rural periphery.

Norway, Sweden, and Finland are quite large in area but are not densely populated than other European nations. Sweden ranks as the fourth-largest European country in physical size. Sweden is larger than the US state of California, but in 2019, it has roughly 10.2 million people. In 2019, Finland, Norway, and Denmark all had less than six million people each.

The cultures and societies of northern Europe have progressed along similar paths; they have advanced from once Viking-dominated lands into modern democratic and socially mature nations. Northern Europe is known for its concern for the social welfare of its citizens. Their strong egalitarian ideals have contributed to significant advancements in free medical care, free education, and free social services for all, regardless of nationality or minority status. Civil rights for minorities, women, and other groups is assured and protected. Denmark does not have a legal age for alcoholic beverages consumption, though tradition sets the age at about fourteen. Culture and the arts are well developed, including giving the annual Nobel Peace Prize. Sweden has become a significant exporter of music worldwide. Rock, hip-hop, and pop music are common genres. With English as a widely spoken language in

Scandinavia, music and cultural trends have a broader export market in places such as the United States and Britain.

Southern Europe

Southern Europe includes three large peninsulas that extend into the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. The Iberian Peninsula consists of Spain and Portugal. The Pyrenees mountain range separates the Iberian Peninsula from France. Greece, the most southern country on the Balkan Peninsula, includes hundreds of surrounding islands and Crete's large island. The Italian Peninsula is the shape of a boot with the Apennine Mountains running down its center. Italy also includes the islands of Sicily and Sardinia. Technically, the island country of Cyprus is also included in southern Europe. There are five ministates in this region. The small island of Malta is located to the south of Sicily and is an independent country. Monaco, San Marino, Andorra, and Vatican City are also independent states located within the region. Southern Europe's type C climate, moderated by the water surrounding it, is often referred to as a Mediterranean climate, which has mild, wet winters and hot, dry summers. The rural-to-urban shift in southern Europe has not been as strong as that of Western Europe. Only about 50 percent of the people in Portugal are urban; in Spain and Greece, about 60 percent is urban.

Italy is more representative of Europe, with about 68 percent of the population urbanized. Italy is also divided, with northern Italy being more industrialized than southern Italy. The southern regions of Italy, including the island of Sicily, are more rural with fewer industries. Northern Italy has the metropolitan city of Milan as an anchor for its global industrial and financial sector in the Lombardy region, including the city of Turin and the port of Genoa. This northern region of Italy has the economic muscle to be one of Europe's leading manufacturing centers. The so-called Ancona Line can be drawn across Italy from Ancona on the east coast to Rome on the west coast to separate the industrial north from the more agrarian south. The north also has the noted cultural cities of Venice, Florence, and Pisa.

A similar situation exists in Spain. The urbanized Catalonia region around Barcelona in the northeast has high-tech industries and a high standard of living. Southern Spain has large rural areas with economies heavily based on agricultural production. Portugal and Greece are not as industrialized and do not have the same economic opportunities. Historically, in particular, southern Europe, Portugal, and Greece have had a much lower gross domestic product (GDP) per capita than northern or Central Europe. Their economies have been much more aligned with the economic periphery than with Europe's industrial core region. Greece has had severe economic difficulty in the past few years.

Southern European countries have much larger populations than their northern European counterparts. Italy has about sixty million people in an area smaller than Norway, which has less than five million. Spain has about forty million; both Portugal and Greece have more than ten million. Cultural factors are also different here than in northern Europe. The culture of southern Europe has been built around agriculture. Traditional cuisine is based on locally grown fresh food and wine. Olive oil and wine have been major agricultural exports. Iberia and Italy's primary languages are based on the Romance language group, and Greek is an independent branch of the Indo-European language family. The most dominant religious affiliation in the south is Roman Catholicism, except in Greece, where the Eastern (Greek) Orthodox Church is prominent.

Spain is the most diverse nation in southern Europe with several distinct ethnic groups. The Basques in the north along the French border would like to separate and create their nation-state. The region of Galicia in northwest Spain is an autonomous region and was once a kingdom unto itself. There are many other autonomous communities in Spain, each with its distinct heritage and culture. Farther east in the Mediterranean is the island state of Cyprus, divided by Greek and Turkish ethnic groups. The southern part of the island is dominated by Greek heritage and culture, and Turkish culture and traditions dominate the northern part of the island. Islam

is the main religion of the Turkish north. The people of southern Europe are diverse and hold to many different traditions but are tied together by the sea and the land, creating similar lifestyles and economic activities.

Central Europe

In the regional sense of location, when discussing the European continent's political geography, the specific states located in the western part of the European mainland are often referred to as Central Europe. Germany and France are the two dominant states, with Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg making up the Benelux countries. Switzerland and Austria border the Alpine region. The ministate of Liechtenstein is located on the border between Switzerland and Austria. France is the only country with coastlines on both the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean. These countries are located in Europe's core economic region and have stable democratic governments and a relatively high standard of living by world comparisons.

Central Europe is a powerhouse of global economics. The Rhine River is a pathway for industrial activity from southern Germany to Europe's busiest port of Rotterdam in the Netherlands, while Western France has the EU's political capital along the Rhine at Strasbourg. To the south is France's second-largest city, Lyon, a major industrial center for modern

technology. Germany had the historical Ruhr industrial complex along the Rhine that supported the high-tech industries in southern Germany in the cities of Stuttgart, Mannheim, and Munich. Germany is the most populous country in Europe, with over 82 million people in 2019. Germany is also Europe's largest economy and has the largest GDP overall as a country. Belgium has important business centers in Brussels and Antwerp, whereas Switzerland is noted for its banking and financial markets. Luxembourg has one of the highest GDP per capita in all of Europe. Austria is noted for its high level of cultural activities in Vienna and Salzburg. All these countries complement each other in creating one of the dominant economic core areas in the world.

In the first half of the twentieth century, the political geography of Central Europe was not conducive to the high level of economic cooperation that now exists. In World War and World War II, Germany and France were on opposite sides, and the Benelux countries were caught in the middle. The cultural differences between the Germans and the French start with the differences in language and religious affiliation. Germany was divided after World War II into East Germany and West Germany, separated by the so-called Iron Curtain. East Germany was under a Communist government, and West Germany was a capitalist democracy. They were reunited in 1990 when the Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall came down. The two countries merged under one government. Europe

is gradually being united economically, but each country or region still retains its cultural uniqueness.

The Benelux Countries

The Benelux countries have a great deal in common historically. Before the economic union that created the term Benelux, these countries were collectively referred to as the Low Countries, so-called because of their relative position to sea level. The Benelux countries are some of the most densely populated countries. They have managed to work together toward a common economic objective despite their cultural differences.

The capital and largest city in Belgium is Brussels, with the other urban areas being Antwerp and Ghent's ports. Belgium is split into three broad geographic areas. The dominant language in Flanders' northern region is Dutch (Flemish), and the people are known as Flemings. In the southern region of Wallonia, most people speak French and are known as Walloons. German is the third official language and is spoken along the eastern border.

When the Industrial Revolution diffused across the English Channel and arrived in Europe, Belgium was one of the first countries to adapt to technological developments. Belgium remains heavily industrialized and is a significant exporter of

products, including polished diamonds, food products, nonferrous metals, technology, petroleum products, and plastics. In general, Belgium imports the raw materials to manufacture these goods for export. Belgium also has a significant services sector. The services sector, including real estate, hotels, restaurants, and entertainment, thrives because Brussels is the headquarters of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and components of the EU. Many countries and organizations maintain Brussels offices to have easy access to these headquarters; therefore, Brussels is the temporary home to many diplomats and foreign business people.

The European country of the Netherlands also includes the colonies of the Netherlands Antilles in the Caribbean. Sometimes called Holland, the Netherlands is two provinces (North Holland and South Holland) in the country's northwestern part. The largest city is Amsterdam. The Hague is the seat of government and is home to the United Nations International Court of Justice. Rotterdam is located at the Rhine River's mouth and is one of the continent's busiest ports. The country is famous for its Zuider Zee, the sizeable inland region below sea level that has been drained of water and surrounded by an extensive dike protecting it from the North Sea. Reclaiming land from the sea in areas called polders has provided this densely

populated country with more land area for its people to expand their activities.

For a small country with few natural resources, the Netherlands has an impressive GDP. The Dutch have made good use of their location on the North Sea and the location of several large navigable rivers. This has facilitated voluminous exports to the interior parts of Europe. The major industries include food processing, chemicals, petroleum refining, and electrical machinery. The Netherlands is a top exporter of agricultural products, which contribute substantially to its economy. Dutch agricultural exports consist of fresh-cut plants, flowers, bulbs, tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers.

The main languages spoken in the small landlocked country of Luxemburg are French, German, and Luxembourgish. Luxembourg's major city is Luxembourg City. Luxemburg has an enviable economic situation with a stable and prosperous economy, low unemployment, and low inflation. Thanks to rich iron-ore deposits, this country developed a robust steel industry, which was the cornerstone of the nation's prosperity until the 1970s. As steel declined, Luxemburg remade itself as an important world financial center. Luxembourg leads Europe as the center for private banking and insurance industries and is second only to the United States to be an investment fund center.

France

France covers 211,209 square miles and is the second-largest European country; Ukraine is slightly larger in physical size. France's physical landscapes vary widely from the northern low-lying coastal plains to the east's Alpine ranges. Mont Blanc, the highest mountain in the Alpine range at 15,782 feet, is located in France near the Italian border. In the far south, the Pyrenees run along the border with Spain. The south-central region of the country is home to the Massif Central, a plateau and highland region made up of a vast stretch of extinct volcanoes.

During the colonial era, France was a significant naval power and held colonies around the world. The French Empire was the second largest at the time. The French language is still used for diplomacy in many countries. Though the French Empire no longer exists, France has progressed into a post-industrial country with one of the world's most developed economies. It is a significant player in European affairs, the EU, and the United Nations (UN). France is a democratic republic that boasts a high-quality public education system and long life expectancies.

In 2019, France's population was about 67 million, with about ten million living in France's Paris primate city. The city of Paris is on an excellent site; it is favorably situated concerning

its surrounding area. It is a significant core area of France serving a large peripheral region of the country. The next largest city of Lyon, which is a major high-tech industrial center for Europe's economy, can only boast a population of about 1.4 million. Even with a large population, the country can produce enough food for its domestic needs and export profits. France leads Europe in agricultural production.

France enjoys a robust economy and is one of the world's leading industrial producers. Its industrial pursuits are diverse, including planes, trains, automobiles, textiles, telecommunications, food products, pharmaceuticals, construction and civil engineering, chemicals, and mechanical equipment and machine tools. Additionally, defense-related industries make up a significant sector of the economy. France's production of military weapons is recognized worldwide. The country has been a leader in the use of nuclear energy to produce electricity. Nuclear energy supplies about 80 percent of the country's electricity, reducing the need for imported oil and other fossil fuels.

Agriculture is an essential sector of the French economy, as it has been for centuries, and is tied to the industry through food processing. Food processing industries employ more people than any other part of the French manufacturing sector. If you think of cheese and wine when you think of France, you have identified two of its largest food processing endeavors, along with sugar beets, meats, and confectionaries. World-renowned

wines are produced in abundance, sometimes in areas that bear their names, such as in Burgundy, around the city of Bordeaux, and in Champagne in the Loire Valley. French cuisine and fashion have long been held in the highest esteem worldwide and are a national pride source. Food and wine are essential elements of the French way of life, and each region of France boasts a suite of famous dishes.

Thanks to the climate and favorable soil conditions, agriculture is highly productive and lucrative for France. France is second only to the United States in terms of agricultural exports. Exports mainly go to other EU countries, to the United States, and some countries in Africa. The plains of northern France are excellent for wheat, which is grown on large agricultural operations. Dairy products are a specialty in France's western regions, producing pork, poultry, and apples. Beef cattle are raised in the central portion, where a cooler, wetter climate provides ample tracts of grasslands for grazing. Fruit, including wine grapes, is grown in the central and southern regions, as are vegetables. The Mediterranean region is blessed with hot, dry weather ideal for growing grapes and other fruits and vegetables.

Germany

Germany's location in Central Europe has meant that throughout history, many peoples—all with their own

cultures, ideas, languages, and traditions—have traversed Germany at one time or another. Thus Germany’s culture has received many influences over the centuries.

Germany’s present geopolitical configuration is relatively young, as it reunified the eastern and western portions into a single entity in 1990. Germany was formed in 1871 during the leadership of Otto von Bismarck in an attempt to create a Germanic power base. World War I was fought during the last years of the German Empire. As part of the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Bulgaria), Germany was defeated by the Allies with much loss of life. The German Republic was created in 1918 when, having been defeated in World War I, Germany was forced to sign the Treaty of Versailles.

In 1933, with an environment of poverty, disenfranchisement of the people, and significant instability in the government, Germany gave way to the appointment of Adolf Hitler as chancellor of Germany. Within a month of taking office, Hitler suspended natural rights and freedoms and assumed absolute power. A centralized totalitarian state quickly resulted. In a move to expand Germany, Hitler started to expand its borders. Germany’s invasion of Poland in 1939 kicked off what would become World War II. In 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet Union and declared war on the United States. After Germany’s defeat, the country was divided into East Germany, controlled by the Soviet Union, and West Germany, controlled

by the Allied powers. The Iron Curtain divided the two Germanys, with the Berlin Wall dividing the city of Berlin. The Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall were major symbols of the Cold War. In 1989, the Berlin Wall came down, and the two Germanys were reunited in 1990. Today, Germany is a vibrant country and an active EU member.

Germany is Europe's largest economy, with strong exports of manufactured goods. To gain national income, Germany has promoted manufacturing as a significant component of its economy. Most exports are in automobiles, machinery, metals, and chemical goods. Germany has positioned itself strategically to take economic advantage of the growing global awareness of environmental issues and problems by focusing on improvements and manufacturing of wind turbines and solar power technology. The service sector also contributes heavily to the economy. Deutsche Bank holds the enviable position of being one of the most profitable companies on the Fortune 500 list. Germany is also an important tourist destination. The Black Forest, Bavaria, the Alpine south, various medieval castles, national parks, and a vibrant assortment of festivals such as Oktoberfest attract millions of tourists to Germany every year.

German reunification in 1990 posed some challenges for the economy. Notably, the East German infrastructure was far behind that of the West. Telecommunications, and other areas needed to support industry, commerce, transportation, and

enormous amounts of money were funneled into the system. While there has been considerable success in the renewal of infrastructure, unemployment in former East Germany is still significantly higher, and the workforce's necessary retraining is ongoing and expensive.

Language, religion, and education have been strong cultural forces in Germany. German is the official language of the country and the one spoken by most of its people. More than 60 percent of Germans self-identify as Christian, and another 30 percent self-identify as agnostic or atheistic. During the Cold War, East Germany was under a Communist government that promoted a non-religious ideology, resulting in a high percentage of people with agnostic or atheistic beliefs in that part of Germany. Historically, there has been a strong connection between religious reformation and education. The early leaders of the Christian Reformation were generally highly educated themselves and were strong advocates of education, which they viewed as a path to positive moral and social reform. The German tradition of excellence in education continues. Education is provided at no cost (other than taxation) to students at all levels, including the university level, though some universities are now starting to charge very modest amounts for tuition.

The Alpine Center

Landlocked in the center of Europe are the two states of Switzerland and Austria. Sandwiched on the border of these two states is the ministate of Lichtenstein. The Alpine ranges dominate this region. Switzerland, officially known as the Swiss Confederation, is divided into twenty-six cantons (states). Because of its location and close ties with neighboring countries, four languages are spoken in Switzerland: German, French, Italian, and Romansh. Typically, one language predominates in any given canton. Berne is the country's capital, and Geneva, Zurich, and Basel are the other major cities. As of 2019, Switzerland's population is roughly 8.5 million. It is a land area that is just slightly larger than the US state of Maryland.

Internationally, Switzerland is well known for its political neutrality. The UN European offices are located there. The Red Cross and the main offices of many international organizations are located in Switzerland. Switzerland joined the UN in 2002 and has applied for EU membership. Swiss culture is thought to have benefited from Switzerland's neutrality. During times of war and political turmoil, creative people found refuge within the Swiss borders. Swiss banking practices and policies are known worldwide, and Swiss banks have significantly benefited from their politically neutral

status. Banking is one of the country's top employers and sources of income. Swiss people enjoy a high standard of living.

Sports are popular in Switzerland, and football or soccer is popular as it is in much of Europe. Switzerland has also produced excellence in hockey, skiing, and of late, tennis. There is an emphasis on science in Swiss culture with good historical reason: modern chemistry originated in Switzerland. The Bernoulli family, famed for their significant contributions to mathematics over many years, hails from Basel. The Federal Institute of Technology in Zürich, one of the world's top-ranked universities, has produced an unusually high number of Nobel Prize winners. Albert Einstein, though born in Germany, relocated to Switzerland and later became a Swiss citizen.

Austria is larger than its neighbor Switzerland and is similar in area to the US state of South Carolina. In 2019, the population was estimated at 8.7 million. Austria has various Alpine ranges, with the highest peak at 12,457 feet in elevation. Only about a fourth of the land area is considered low lying for habitation. The Danube River flows through the country, including the capital city of Vienna. Austria has a well-developed social market economy and a high standard of living.

For more than six hundred years, beginning just before the dawn of the fourteenth century, Austria was tightly associated with its ruling dynasty, the Habsburgs. The Hapsburgs came

to power in a new way with the formation of the Austrian Empire in 1804. In Germany's rise to power before World War II, Hitler annexed his native Austria to Germany. Austria regained its independence a decade after the war ended and joined the EU in 1995. Austria is a German-speaking country, and nearly the entire population self-identifies as an ethnic Austrian.

Austria is predominantly Roman Catholic and was home to many monasteries in the Middle Ages, influencing a strong Austrian literary tradition. Austria's best-known cities are its capital of Vienna and Salzburg, and Innsbruck. Vienna was the Habsburg and Austrian Empires center and earned a place as one of the world's great cities. It is famed for its baroque architecture; its music, particularly waltzes; and theater. The Habsburgs were great patrons of the arts, and hence music, drama, and art thrived for centuries in Austria. The country has been home to many famous composers and musicians and has a worldwide reputation in music and the arts.

The British Isles

The British Isles are an archipelago, a group of islands separated from the English Channel's European mainland. The British Isles are often included in Western Europe when discussing political geography; however, they are separated from Europe's mainland by water, providing them with a

separate identity. The British Isles consists of two separate, independent countries: the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain. The United Kingdom (UK) of Great Britain consists of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. All four regions are now under the UK government. The Republic of Ireland is independent of the United Kingdom and does not include Northern Ireland. The primate city and UK capital is London, which is a financial center for Europe. The capital city of the Republic of Ireland is Dublin.

Influenced by the Gulf Stream, the British Isles' climate is moderate, despite its northern latitude location. The UK and Ireland are located above the fiftieth degree of latitude, which is farther north than the US-Canadian border. The northern latitude would typically place this region into the type D climates, with harsher winters and more extreme seasonal temperatures. However, the surrounding water moderates temperature, creating a moderate type C climate covering most of the British Isles. The Gulf Stream pulls warm water from the tropics and circulates it north, off Europe's coast, to moderate Western Europe's temperature.

The Western Highlands and the Northern Lowlands dominate the islands. Scotland, Wales, and parts of England have highland regions with small mountains and rugged terrain, whereas the lowlands of southern England, Ireland, and central Scotland offer agricultural opportunities. The Pennines Mountains runs through northern England and

was the source of the coal, ores, and waterpower that fueled the Industrial Revolution. To the east of Britain is the North Sea, which provided an abundance of petroleum resources (oil) for energy and wealth.

Though the British Isles' heritage is unique to this region, the geographic dynamics are similar to Central Europe. They tend to have smaller families, urbanization and industrialization are robust, enjoy high incomes, and are significantly involved with economic globalization. The EU has had an enormous influence on the British Isles. Ireland has embraced EU's economic connections, but the British people have been hesitant to relinquish full autonomy to the EU. This reluctance can be noted in the fact that the United Kingdom kept the British pound sterling as their currency standard after the euro currency was implemented. However, the Republic of Ireland converted to the euro currency.

The regions of the British Isles follow similar dynamics to those of other countries in Western Europe. Though some regions are not as wealthy as others, they all demonstrate a high industrialization, urbanization, and technology level. These urban societies have smaller families and higher incomes and are heavy consumers of energy, goods, and services. Just as the Industrial Revolution attracted cheap labor, the aging workforce has enticed people from former British colonies to migrate to the United Kingdom in search of increased employment opportunities. The mix of immigrants with local

heritage creates a diverse community. London has diverse communities with many ethnic businesses and business owners.

Devolutionary forces are active in the United Kingdom. Scotland and Wales are already governing their local parliaments. Devolutionary cultural differences can be noted by studying the different heritages found in each region. Just as the Welsh language is lingering in Wales, Gaelic continues in Ireland and Scotland. Each region has made efforts to retain local heritage and rally support for its nation-state. However, this is all done with the overall perspective of remaining under the umbrella of the EU.

Northern England

Home to the Industrial Revolution, major industrial cities such as Manchester and Birmingham brought together the labor, raw materials, and industry connections necessary to manufacture products. The port city of Liverpool gave access to the world markets established by Britain's extensive colonial empire, and the colonies provided raw materials, new ideas, and cheap labor for the new industrial factories. Great Britain was an avid colonizer and controlled colonies on all inhabited continents. Raw materials such as cotton, which did not grow well in Britain, became a major import fueled by the Industrial Revolution's textile mills.

Industrialization caused a rural-to-urban shift in Britain. In 1800, only 9 percent of the population lived in urban areas, but by 1900 some 62 percent resided in cities and towns. As of 2019, over 90 percent of Britain's population is composed of urban dwellers. The British colonial empire also caused a migration pattern whereby people moved from colonies to the home country, with the core area located in northern England's Midlands. Cheap immigrant labor and resources from the colonies provided the manufacturing enterprises of wealthy British industrialists with good fortunes. Raw cotton was brought in from the colonies of India and Egypt. Cheap labor, brought in from the Caribbean and South Asia, resulted in a more diverse population in industrialized northern England.

As the information age developed, northern England's industrial centers gave way to a post-industrialized southern England. The north's heavy industries experienced a decline in demand. Factories closed, production became automated, and unemployment increased. The transition from the Industrial Revolution to a postindustrial society turned northern England into the British Isles' Rust Belt. The port of Liverpool has been updated with modern and automated systems that do not require the high level of manual labor necessary during earlier industrial times. Rail service connects Liverpool with London, connected to Paris through a tunnel under the English Channel called the Chunnel.

The postindustrial economic activities have shifted the focus of employment away from manual labor to the service sector of information. Many places have looked to tourism to boost their economic situation. Northern England has many attractive physical environments that have been developed into major tourist attractions. The Lake District of northern England is a famous vacation destination, and small mountains and scenic landscapes attracted several of England's writers. The city of Blackpool on the Irish Sea, just north of Liverpool, is a major vacation destination for the English. The dales and moors of northern England, complemented by the short Pennines, provide a sharp contrast to London and southern England's urban metropolitan landscapes.

Southern England

Anchored by London's primate city, southern England also is home to Oxford and Cambridge's universities. This is Great Britain's most affluent region and is a center of postindustrial activity. Located on the Thames River, London is a central player in the world's financial markets. Southern England also houses about one-third of the UK population. With immigration from the former colonies, this region is also becoming more diverse. This is an urbanized region, where the cost of living, transportation, and housing is high. For example, gasoline in the United Kingdom might cost two or

three times more than in the United States. Many urban dwellers do not own automobiles but instead use public transportation.

England is the most populous region of the United Kingdom, with about one thousand people per square mile. About half the population increase is because of immigration. The UK population is aging due to smaller family sizes and a growing number of senior citizens. This trend is common in countries in stage 5 of the index of economic development. Immigrants from many parts of the world have targeted England as their new home. Many are from former British colonies in Asia and Africa. England has a diverse population. Islam is the fastest-growing religion, even though Muslims make up less than 10 percent of the total population. London is even home to a growing Sikh community.

London is the United Kingdom's primate city and capital; it is the largest administrative municipality in the entire EU. Only Paris has a larger overall metropolitan area. London is a global center that holds prominence in world markets and the globalization process. About one-fifth of Europe's largest corporations have their headquarters in London. The city's cultural influence is felt worldwide in the fashion industry, media, entertainment, and the arts. London is an international city that has a powerful draw for tourists. London's international recognition anchors the core economic region of Europe.

Southern England is also home to Great Britain's seat of government. The UK government is considered a constitutional monarchy with a king or queen as head of state. The parliament is the official legislative body with a prime minister as head of government. The parliament has two bodies: the House of Commons, whose members are elected, and the House of Lords, whose members are appointed for life. As head of state, the monarch is mainly a figurehead with little actual political power. Several dependencies remain under the British Crown as far as sovereignty is concerned. Small islands such as Guernsey, Jersey, the Isle of Man, and various islands in the Caribbean and Atlantic and Pacific Oceans remain under the British government for administrative, economic, and defense purposes.

Wales

A highland region to the west of England, Wales holds a Celtic heritage in which the Welsh language and coal mining stories can still be heard. However, the English language has become more dominant, and tourism has replaced coal mining as the main economic activity. The decline in coal use depressed the economy but did not depress the Welsh people's culture and heritage – the largest city and capital of Wales in Cardiff. In the early twentieth century, Cardiff's port handled the largest amount of coal globally and handled more tons of cargo than

Liverpool or London. The decline in coal mining has reduced the shipping activity in Cardiff's port in the twenty-first century.

Devolution is alive and well in Wales. Welsh nationalism prompted the declaration of a separate parliament in the capital of Cardiff. London's break provided local autonomy, but Wales is still reliant on the United Kingdom in national and foreign affairs. Many of the young people in Wales emigrate to find work because of the depressed economy. Emigration has caused a leveling off of population growth, and the number of people who speak Welsh has diminished. Wales and England share a common Protestant Christian religion. Wales is turning to tourism as a means of economic income; the scenic and picturesque landscape of the highland region, with its many castles, provides a pleasant experience for tourists.

Scotland

United with England in 1707, Scotland has been integrated into the United Kingdom while keeping its separate heritage and culture. Scotland has strong centripetal forces uniting the Scottish people, including victories over the British by Scottish clans, led by William Wallace in 1297 and Robert the Bruce in 1314; these forces within Scotland have created a devolutionary split with the UK parliament. In the quest to become a nation-state unto itself, in 1997, Scotland received

permission to create its parliament to govern local affairs. Though Scotland wants to separate into an independent state, they do not wish to isolate themselves from the EU or greater Europe. This opposite trend, in which local states want autonomy and self-rule yet also want to remain within the broader regional community for economic and national security, is common. The phrase “separate within the Union” is surfacing in Europe with stronger voices. Scotland remains under the British Crown and shares a Protestant Christian heritage with its UK associates.

The Scottish Highlands provide for livestock production, and the central Scottish Lowlands are favorable for agriculture. The North Sea has extensive oil resources. With resources such as these, Scotland can gain wealth and support its small population of about five million people. As an early export product, scotch whiskey has profited many whiskey marketers and has become the most extensive Scotland export product. Scotland benefited and gained wealth during the Industrial Revolution. As a part of an island, early shipbuilding produced ships that brought about trade and development that coincided with European colonialism.

Postindustrial activities have become a focus of the current economy. High-tech computer industries have concentrated in Silicon Glen, an information-age industrial sector between Scotland’s largest city, Glasgow, and Edinburgh’s capital. With natural resources and postindustrial opportunities, Scotland

is in an excellent position to compete in the global economic community. Scottish banking firms reach around the globe through their investment holdings. Scotland attracts a healthy tourism market with its Highlands and many castles. Kilts and bagpipes are a part of Scottish history and often distinguish themselves as a part of the region's heritage. The game of golf originated in Scotland and is still popular today.

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is a place in which strong cultural forces often erupt into violence. Officially part of the United Kingdom, this small region with about 1.8 million people has developed a unique set of social problems. Most people consider religious differences to be the main problem in Northern Ireland. People of Irish heritage are predominately Roman Catholic, and those of Scottish and English heritages are usually Protestant Christians. However, it is not so simple. If the troubles (as they are called in the United Kingdom) in Northern Ireland were based solely on religion, we should expect to see similar violence in other regions of the United States or Europe.

The core of the social problems in Northern Ireland is based on political affiliations. Most of the population in the region is not Irish. About 55 percent of the population is of Scottish or English descent, with only about 45 percent of Irish descent.

The real problem centers on the governing of Ireland. The Irish would like to see Northern Ireland join with the Republic of Ireland, which received its independence from the British in 1921. The Irish do not want to be under the UK parliament with the Queen of England as head of state. Irish countrymen want total independence from the United Kingdom. The non-Irish population does not want to be a part of the Republic of Ireland and its Irish parliament and would instead remain under the British Crown. The people of Scottish descent would prefer total independence from all outside forces. English people want to remain with the UK parliament.

Though the real problem is political, religion has become the scapegoat. Because cultural differences can be witnessed between Catholics and Protestants, religion has become the two sides' identifier. They are not necessarily fighting over religious beliefs but rather over political power and control.

The troubles of Northern Ireland have diminished its economic and employment opportunities. Underground paramilitary groups such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) have heightened tensions between the two groups for decades, with car bombings and other terrorist acts. Hope might lie with a generational change in the population. As the younger generation seeks more opportunities and advantages, the issues that separate the two sides could diminish. Over the years, the hatred built up can be eased with each new generation if centripetal forces work to bridge the differences and unite

the social fabric. If the killing and hatred are passed down to successive generations, it will only take longer to recover.

In 1998, after a series of terrorist acts that were condemned on all sides, a movement took place to create the Northern Ireland Assembly with both sides of the division. Obstacles continue to surface to disrupt this calming process, but there is hope that in the future, solutions such as this assembly can work toward producing a lasting peace. The devolutionary forces active in Wales and Scotland may act to create a more separate Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Assembly was only one step. Progress in Northern Ireland is an uphill battle with high unemployment, a weak resource base, and few economic opportunities. Only by working together will Northern Ireland become a stable, peaceful part of the British Isles.

The Republic of Ireland

The whole island of Ireland was under the control of the British Crown for centuries. In 1921 independence was gained from the British for all but Northern Ireland. This bitterly fought conflict has become well entrenched in Irish culture and literature. As an independent country separate from the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland has ascended the economic ladder to become a global economic community. Because the climate is type C, there is adequate rainfall for crops and vegetation, and the green landscape gives it the title,

“The Emerald Isle.” The island has few other natural resources. There are trees but no vast forest reserves for commercial exploitation. Peat, an early version of coal, is cut from the bogs and burned as fuel.

Ireland is not a vast country. It is just a bit larger than the US state of West Virginia, with a population of about four million. There are no tall mountain ranges in Ireland. The soils are traditionally rocky with few nutrients. Before colonial times, the traditional food crops included such turnips and rutabagas. When the potato was imported from the Americas, it was well-received in Ireland. The potato plant grew well and replaced traditional root crops as the primary food source.

In the early 1800s, the population of the whole of Ireland (including what is now Northern Ireland) was as high as eight million. Starting in the 1840s, blight and rot destroyed much of the potato crop year after year, causing a severe famine in Ireland. More than a million people died, and another two million people left the island. The potato famine caused losses reminiscent of the Black Death, which had ravaged Europe centuries earlier. Black Death’s history may have led to the term Black Irish, which referred to people who fled Ireland during the potato famine and immigrated to the United States. They were often regarded as lower-class citizens and were discriminated against. Well-established Irish families had immigrated to the United States before the 1840s were not

considered Black Irish and assimilated into mainstream American society more quickly.

The lack of natural resources and the lack of opportunities and advantages held back the Republic of Ireland from developing a strong economy. It was not until the 1990s that conditions improved. With the EU's creation and communication advancements, Ireland became an ideal location for expanding North American corporations. The attractive elements included a mild climate, a similar English language, an educated workforce, and a low living cost. Many high-tech computer firms, communication companies, and electronic industries established their operations base in Ireland – Dublin in particular. Because Ireland was a member of the EU, it was a convenient intermediary location between the United States and the European mainland. Business boomed in the 1990s, and incomes and the cost of living rose. Tourism also has become a growing sector of the economy. The economic growth in Ireland earned it the title Celtic Tiger to indicate its growing economic power.

However, the rapidly expanding economic conditions of the 1990s have not extended into the twenty-first century. Since 2007, the global depression has taken its toll on the Irish economy. Starting in 2008, the country witnessed a sharp increase in unemployment that coincided with serious banking scandals. Various banks have been targeted for bailout funds from the government, and the economy witnessed a

sharp decline. Property values have plummeted, and protesters have staged demonstrations in the streets demanding the government address the economic situation. Tourism has taken up some of the slack and has expanded by highlighting the Emerald Isle's mild climate and green countryside. Cities such as Dublin are working with the growing pains of recovery in the economic recession.

Unemployment remains a concern, as well as declining economic opportunities. Overall, Ireland is working to reposition itself for future economic growth. The country wants to maintain itself as a vital link in the EU's relationship with the United States. Ireland is bracing itself for a sluggish economic road ahead.

10.5 REGIONS OF EASTERN EUROPE

Transitions of Eastern Europe after the Cold War

After World War II ended in 1945, Europe was divided into Western Europe and Eastern Europe by the Iron Curtain. Eastern Europe fell under the Soviet Union's influence, and the region was separated from the West. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, all the Soviet Republics bordering Eastern Europe declared independence from Russia and united with Europe. The transition Eastern Europe has experienced in the last few decades has not been easy; however, most countries are now looking to Western Europe for trade and economic development. Cooperation continues between Eastern and Western Europe, and the European Union (EU) has emerged as the primary economic and political entity of Europe.

The collapse of Communism and the Soviet Union led to upheaval and transition in Eastern Europe in the 1990s. Each country in the region was under Communist rule. The countries bordering Russia were once part of the Soviet

Union, and its dominant position heavily influenced those countries not part of the Soviet Union in the region. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the bordering countries declared independence and integration into the European community. Moldavia changed its name to Moldova. The countries of the Czech Republic and former Yugoslavia each broke into multiple countries and organized around the concept of nation-states because of the diverse ethnic populations. (See Section 2.2.6 “Nation-States and Devolution” for a discussion of nation-states.) The Czech Republic peacefully agreed to separate into the Czech Republic and the Republic of Slovakia. Yugoslavia was not so fortunate.

Most Eastern European political borders resemble ethnic boundaries. Each of the regions once resembled nation-states. In principle, Romania is set apart for Romanians and Hungary for Hungarians. Few are true nation-states because of ethnic minorities within their borders, but the countries held on to their shared heritage throughout the Communist era. In most Eastern European countries, cultural forces have brought people together to publicly support the move to unite and hold onto heritage as old as Europe itself.

Governments that had been controlled by Communist dictators or authoritarian leadership before 1991 were opened up to democratic processes with public elections. With the fall of Communism came economic reforms that shifted countries from central planning to open markets. Under central

planning, the governments dictated which products were produced and how many were produced. The open markets invited private capitalism and western corporate businesses.

The state's power was transferred from the Communist elite to the private citizen. People could vote for their public officials and choose businesses and work individually. With the EU looming over the realm, the now-independent countries of Eastern Europe shifted their economic direction away from Moscow and the collapsing Communist state and toward the core industrial countries of Western Europe and the EU.

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev further set the transition from Communism to capitalism. He began to liberalize the Soviet Union by allowing multiparty elections and encouraging economic reform and societal openness (concepts known throughout the world by the Russian words *perestroika* and *glasnost*, respectively). Simultaneously, the world watched as the Chinese government violently cracked down on student protests in the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, which strengthened many people's revolutionary sentiments and intentions in the Eastern bloc, the former Communist countries of Eastern Europe.

Hungary

During the Communist period, Hungary enjoyed a higher standard of living than its neighbors. It was likely the marked

contrast in daily life between the Communist and post-Communist periods that influenced the 1994 elections' outcome, which gave the Hungarian Socialist Party, led by former Communists, an absolute majority in parliament. Many were concerned that Hungary was signaling a wish to return to the past. Instead, all three main political parties joined together to work toward the common goals of continued liberalization of the economy, closer ties with the West, and full EU membership.

Economic reforms have not been easy for Hungary and have resulted in a lower standard of living for most people. The removal of government subsidies, a pillar of Communist rule, led to a recession. To avoid massive inflation and attract investment, government fiscal policies had to be conservative to the point of austerity. However, Hungary's large-scale manufacturing and stable government have aided it through the latest global economic downturn.

An essential characteristic of post-Communist Hungary is its desire to become an active member of the global community by joining international organizations. In 1990, Hungary was the first Eastern bloc nation to join the Council of Europe. In 2004, Hungary joined the EU. Also, Hungary joined the other international organizations, including the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Another endeavor that would not have been possible under Communist rule was

tourism development as an important economic sector. Budapest's reputation as an elegant city has helped it become one of Eastern Europe's major tourist attractions. Major movie studios have also traveled to the city to film.

The Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic (Slovakia)

Each country in Eastern Europe has a different story regarding its path from Communism to independence. Countries like the Czech Republic and Hungary were more prepared and better equipped to meet the challenges and were early qualifiers for entry into the EU. Historically, the region occupied by the modern Czech Republic was known as Bohemia and Moravia. The Czech Republic and Slovakia were, until recently, part of the same country: Czechoslovakia, which was created in 1918 from part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after World War II ended. On January 1, 1993, they became two newly independent nations. Slovakia is officially known as the Slovak Republic.

Czechs and Slovaks alike descended from Slavic peoples. The national language of the Czech Republic is Czech, while the official language of Slovakia is Slovakian. Both languages are in the Slavic linguistic family. About 94 percent of the population of the Czech Republic identify themselves as ethnically Czech. The others are Slovenian, Polish, German,

Hungarian, and Roma. About 86 percent of the inhabitants of Slovakia self-identify as ethnically Slovakian. Hungarians make up the largest minority population, and about 2 percent of the population identify themselves as Roma.

Under Communist rule, the standard of living was remarkably high in Czechoslovakia. When market reforms began in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the standard of living declined. The Czech Republic has more rapidly and effectively transferred state control of industry to private ownership than has Slovakia. Also, Slovakia was hit harder by the move away from defense industries, which had employed many people during the Communist period. As a result, unemployment has consistently been higher in Slovakia. Slovakia is not as industrialized as the Czech Republic but has made strides since its independence to provide economic opportunities for its people. Both countries expanded their economic prospects when admitted to the EU in 2004.

The Baltic Republics

The small Baltic states of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania transitioned away from their old Soviet connections. After independence, they quickly looked toward Western Europe for trade and development. Most Eastern European countries followed this pattern. Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania received their independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Russia

withdrew its troops from the region in 1994. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the EU welcomed them as members in 2004. They have transitioned to market economies with democratic governments. The people of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania rapidly expanded their economic conditions after independence but have been hard hit by the global marketplace's downturn in 2008.

Poland

Poland has a long-standing history of working to oppose the Communist domination of its country. The Solidarity movement in Poland started as an independent trade union in the 1980s but became a lightning rod for political change in Poland. The Communist Party dominated politics and suppressed any movement to organize labor against the government. Solidarity's strength became evident in the 1990 election when candidate Lech Wałęsa won Poland's presidential election. Solidarity's victory signified the collapse of the power of the Soviet Union and Communism in Eastern Europe. The country has emerged with a democratic government and a thriving capitalist economy.

Since the fall of Communism, Poland left behind its old state-directed economy and transitioned to a market economy, in which businesses are privately owned and run. When the Communists controlled Poland, there was a strong emphasis

on heavy industry, and that focus is still alive today. Poland produces cars, buses, helicopters, trains, and heavy military equipment, including tanks and ships. Before the Communists industrialized the Polish economy, it was mostly agrarian. Though Poland continues to be one of Europe's leading agricultural producers, with a wide variety of crops and dairy and meat production, it cannot meet its large population's food demands. Poland's economy is still considered to be under development. Reforms, including privatization, must continue before Poland can adopt the euro, the common EU currency.

Unemployment has, at times, presented significant problems for the Polish economy and society. Unemployment skyrocketed to nearly 20 percent in the early 1990s. After that, the situation improved, but unemployment was still at about 14 percent in 2006. By 2010 the situation improved further, and the unemployment rate was around 7 percent. When Poland joined the EU, many people left Poland searching for work. Some of those workers who left have recently returned, as the employment rate and wages increase substantially.

Moldova and Belarus

A variety of cultural and social forces provided diverse levels of civility in the transitions of Eastern Europe. The poor, agrarian economy of Moldova's small landlocked country provides few

opportunities or advantages to grow its economy and provide a stronger future for its people. As a result, young people earning an education or technical skills immigrate to other countries for employment opportunities.

In 1991, independence came to the former Soviet Republic of Belarus. Still, Belarus took a different path from most Eastern bloc countries in that Belarus did not distance itself from its Russian connection. Belarus has consequently experienced authoritarian governments well into the twenty-first century. In this case, Russia and Belarus created a more robust relationship by signing agreements to increase economic integration. However, difficulties have hindered the implementation of many of these policies.

For one thing, the government of Belarus has been slow to move toward democratic reforms. The president has taken on more extraordinary authoritarian powers. Some of the personal freedoms that have been granted in other European countries, such as freedom of the press, free speech, and the right to assemble peacefully, are still restricted in Belarus. As of 2010, Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova have not been admitted into the EU. Belarus has indicated that it might join the Russian Republic and has not even applied for entry into the EU.

Ukraine

With the most extensive physical area in Europe, Ukraine is slightly larger than France. Its population in 2010 was approximately forty-six million, and 77 percent of the population is ethnically Ukrainian, and 17 percent is Russian. Most of the population lives in the industrial regions of the southeast or eastern parts of the country. Though the official language is Ukrainian, many Ukrainians still speak Russian. As with neighboring states, the Eastern Orthodox Church dominates the religious and cultural reflections of the arts, literature, and architecture. As a result, Christian themes are often reflected in paintings, books, and performances.

Ukraine's demographic trend follows a pattern of industrialization with smaller family sizes but continues to have a higher death rate than most European countries. The country is now losing about 150,000 people per year. The low birth rates are similar to those of Russia and southern Europe. Poor health and childhood poverty in Ukraine are two critical issues confirmed by the United Nations (UN). In 2010, Ukraine had a negative population growth rate of -0.62 percent. Fertility rates have been in decline throughout Europe over the past few decades. The average fertility rate in Ukraine is 1.1, one of the world's lowest; in Europe as a whole, the average is about 1.3. Some of these trends can be attributed to alcoholism, poor diets, smoking, and the lack of medical care. The average life expectancy for an adult male in

Ukraine is about sixty-two years. In comparison, the average life expectancy for men in France is about seventy-eight years.

Of the former Soviet Union republics, excluding Russia, Ukraine was far from the most important economic component, producing about four times the next-ranking Soviet republic's output. Nevertheless, its fertile black soil generated more than one-fourth of the overall Soviet agricultural production, and its farms provided substantial quantities of meat, milk, grain, and vegetables to other republics. Likewise, its diversified heavy industry supplied steel pipes and raw materials to Russia's oil and mining industry. Ukraine's political relationship with Russia has been several since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. However, Russia still supplies enormous amounts of natural gas and oil to fuel the economy, and Russia's markets are still highly integrated with those of Ukraine.

Though Ukraine has transitioned from a Soviet republic to a fully independent country, divisive centrifugal forces have made Ukraine's path to free elections and democratically elected leaders difficult. The country has held political elections, but they have been challenged or tainted with corruption and fraud accusations. Today, the country has a democratically elected government and is improving its economy and creating stability for its people.

Romania

Several countries of Eastern Europe have fully transitioned from Communist dictatorships to modern, integrated economies. Romania is one of those countries. Romania encompasses an area equivalent to the US state of Minnesota. Its 21.5 million people include two million who live in Bucharest, the capital and largest city. The Carpathian Mountains circle Romania, with the Transylvanian Alps to the south. The Danube River runs across the region and creates a natural border with Bulgaria and Serbia before flowing into the Black Sea. The Romanian forests are some of the largest in Europe, with about half (13 percent of the country) set aside from logging and placed in watershed conservation programs. The integrity of the ecosystems in the Romanian forests provides diverse habitats for plants and animals. For example, Romania claims to have the most European brown bears and about 40 percent of all European wolves living within its borders.

Tourism is growing in Romania. Almost 5 percent of Romania is placed in protected areas, including thirteen national parks and three biosphere reserves, which are attractive to tourists. Tourist attractions also include medieval castles as well as historic Transylvanian cities. Rural tourism focuses on folklore and traditions, including Bran Castle, referred to locally as Dracula's castle, a mythical person patterned after the stories and legends of Vlad III the Impaler.

Romania's Communist dictator, Nicolae Ceaușescu, ruled from 1965 to 1989. His domination ended when a revolution overthrew the government, where Ceaușescu and his wife were arrested and shot to death. However, even after his death, the Communist Party maintained strong ties to the government until the mid-1990s.

The transition to integrate Romania's economy with the more excellent European economy was delayed because of Romania's obsolete industrial infrastructure, established during the Communist era. Since joining the EU in 2007, Romania has developed a stronger export market with Western European countries. Investments and consumer confidence have fueled the growth of the domestic economy. Romania has worked through several issues to provide a stable government and a growing market economy.

Albania

The southern Adriatic is home to the small country of Albania. The rugged mountainous country of Albania has a Muslim majority. Poverty, unemployment, and a lack of opportunities to gain wealth have plagued the country. Albania has even received Communist support from China. As a result of the war in Kosovo, Albania suffered a significant setback toward an improved standard of living and integration with the rest of Europe. When stability is established, Albania

can become more integrated with the European economy and raise its people's standard of living. Parliamentary democracy has been installed since the Communist era, and foreign investments have aided in developing updated transportation and power grids.

Located in the continents' crossroads, Bulgaria has a major trans-European corridor running through its territory that connects to Asia. The country is home to diverse landscapes, including the sunny Black Sea coast and the Balkan Mountains' higher elevations, reaching 9,596 feet. The Danube River flows across the border with Bulgaria to the Black Sea. About one-third of the country consists of plains, providing extensive agricultural activity. Ore and minerals can also be found in Albania, which has allowed the country to gain wealth.

Upon declaring independence from Russia, Bulgaria held multiparty elections. Its economy is emerging, but the transition to a capitalist system has not been without the difficulties of unemployment, inflation, and corruption. Bulgaria became a member of NATO in 2004 and was accepted for EU membership in 2007. The transition to a free-market economy is still in progress, with mining, industry, and agriculture as the main economic activities. Tourism is an emerging economy segment that has been gaining international attention in recent years. The country has a milder climate than Eastern Europe's northern states and has marketed itself as a major tourist destination. The main points

of interest include historical monasteries, coastal resorts on the Black Sea, and Sofia's capital city.

Former Yugoslavia

A Valuable Lesson in Political and Cultural Geography

The name Yugoslavia, applied to the region along the Adriatic in 1929, means Land of the South Slavs. From 1918 to 1929, the region had been called the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Non-Slavic populations surround the former Yugoslavia. The region's core is mountainous. The Dinaric Alps, with the highest peak at just below nine thousand feet in elevation, run through the center of the Balkan Peninsula. The rugged mountains separate and isolate groups of Slavic people who, over time, have formed separate identities and consider themselves different from those on the other sides of the mountain ridges. As a result, distinct subethnic divisions developed into the Slovenes, Macedonians, Bosnians, Montenegrins, Croats, and Serbs, with various additional groups. These differences led to conflict, division, and war when the breakup of the former Yugoslavia began.

World War I started in Sarajevo, Bosnia, when a Serb advocate assassinated Archduke Ferdinand of the Austria-Hungarian Empire. In the next conflict, World War II, there

was also divisiveness within Yugoslavia: Croatia sided with Nazi Germany, but Serbia was an ally with the Communist Soviet Union. In addition, the region of Bosnia, with a Muslim majority, faced religious opposition from its mainly Christian neighbors. Nevertheless, a group headed by Marshal Tito (a.k.a. Josip Broz) led Yugoslavia after World War II ended in 1945. Tito created a Communist state that attempted to retain its neutrality brand between the Warsaw Pact nations led by the Soviet Union and the West's NATO nations.

Tito was a centripetal force for the region of the former Yugoslavia. For over forty years, he held the many ethnic Slavic groups together under Brotherhood and Unity, which threatened brute military force. It appears to have been effective. The 1984 Winter Olympics were held in Sarajevo to witness Tito's Yugoslavia's progress and unity. At the same time, former Yugoslavia started manufacturing a model of automobiles called the Yugo. While the Yugo was not in the same league as high-end European luxury cars, the ability to make and purchase automobiles was a testimony to the Yugoslav economy's rising industrial level. This progressive trend, unfortunately, was not to last.

The Breakup of Former Yugoslavia

The name Yugoslavia, applied to the region along the Adriatic in 1929, means Land of the South Slavs. From 1918 to 1929, the region had been called the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and

Slovenes. Non-Slavic populations surround the former Yugoslavia. The region's core is mountainous. The Dinaric Alps, with the highest peak at just below nine thousand feet in elevation, run through the center of the Balkan Peninsula. The rugged mountains separate and isolate groups of Slavic people who, over time, have formed separate identities and consider themselves different from those on the other sides of the mountain ridges. As a result, distinct subethnic divisions developed into the Slovenes, Macedonians, Bosnians, Montenegrins, Croats, and Serbs, with various additional groups. These differences led to conflict, division, and war when the breakup of the former Yugoslavia began.

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Military forces continue to monitor and secure the regions of Bosnia. Portions of Bosnia under Serb control have declared themselves the Republic of Srpska and have attempted to create their nation-state. The remaining territory of Bosnia (51 percent) consists of a joint Bosnian/Croat federation. Both regions have sublevel governments within the formal country of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Herzegovina is a small region extending from the city of Mostar to the southern border with Montenegro. In June of 2006, the region of Montenegro declared itself independent of Serbia. Montenegro uses the euro as its currency and has applied for WTO membership. Montenegro has privatized its primary industries and is soliciting a tourism industry.

The War for Kosovo

Under President Miloševik, former Yugoslavia sought to ensure that Kosovo would never leave the umbrella of Greater

Serbia. The 1.8 million Albanian Muslims who lived in Kosovo constituted 90 percent of the population by 1989. They did not want to live under Serb control. Serbia claimed that Kosovo was the heart of the Serb Orthodox Church and the cradle of the medieval Serbian Empire. The historic battles against the Islamic Turkish Ottoman Empire in Kosovo have been memorialized in Serb tradition and history.

The main opposition to the Serb power structure in Kosovo in the early 1990s was the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). Many in the KLA wanted an independent Kosovo and an alliance with Albania. In 1998, Miloševik sent troops into areas controlled by the KLA. The civil war in Kosovo between Serbs and Albanian Muslims devastated the region and created thousands of refugees. Both forces' tension, hatred, and massacres further complicated the peace process. In March of 1999, NATO implemented a unified mission, called Operation Allied Force, to force Miloševik to discontinue the ethnic cleansing campaign and end Kosovo's violence.

In June of 1999, Miloševik yielded to a peace agreement that brought Kosovo under the UN and NATO forces' auspices, removed the Serb military, and allowed the safe return of over eight hundred thousand refugees from Albania, Montenegro, and Macedonia. However, Miloševik lost his bid for the presidency in the 2000 elections and was arrested for crimes against humanity in 2001. The charges brought against him included ethnic cleansing and torture. He died in 2006 while in custody before the trial ended.

NATO forces continue to be stationed in Kosovo to keep the peace and restore order. After much negotiation between the UN and regional entities, the Kosovo Assembly declared its independence from Serbia in 2008. Serb officials overwhelmingly opposed Kosovo's independence, as they had in 1991. Kosovo's status is now pending in the UN.

Conclusion of Former Yugoslavia

Kosovo and the independent republics of former Yugoslavia provide an excellent study in the dynamics of ethnicity, culture, and political geography. The lessons learned from this region could be applied to many other world areas suffering similar conflicts, such as Chechnya, Iraq, Afghanistan, Rwanda, Congo/Zaire, or East Timor. Former Yugoslavia represents an example of how divisive centrifugal and devolutionary forces can lead to nationalism and eventually to war. The drive toward a nation-state has fueled nationalism and conflict in the Balkans. The civil wars within the former Yugoslavia have cost thousands of lives and destroyed an infrastructure that had taken decades to build. Geographers have called Eastern Europe a shatter belt because of the conflicts and divisions there.

Despite the problems with the transition in Eastern Europe, the region has seen enormous economic gains. Once part of former Yugoslavia, even Slovenia has rebounded with strong economic growth. Many of the progressive Eastern European

countries have been accepted into the EU. The map of the EU includes many of the developing Eastern bloc countries. Eastern Europe has experienced many transitions throughout its history. The transition from Communism to capitalism is only one part of the geography and history of Eastern Europe.

10.6 SUMMARY

The European continent extends from the North Atlantic Ocean to the Ural Mountains in Russia. The Russian segment of the European continent is usually studied with Russia as a whole. The Arctic Ocean borders Europe to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the west, and the Mediterranean Sea to the south.

The Gulf Stream helps create a type C climate for much of Western Europe. Type D climates dominate the north and eastern portions of Eastern Europe. Europe has four prominent physical landforms that provide a diversity of resources for human activity.

European colonialism brought increased wealth and economic activity to Western Europe. The Industrial Revolution also began here. Europe developed into an industrialized realm with powerful economic forces that continue to drive globalization's postindustrial engine. The rural-to-urban shift and urbanization were products of industrialization. The result for Europe has been smaller families and higher incomes.

The Roman Empire created early infrastructure networks for southern Europe, while the Vikings connected northern

Europe through trade and warfare. The latest attempt to unify the European nations is through supranationalism in forming the European Union (EU). Countries that have strong economies and stable governments are allowed to join the EU.

Western Europe can be divided into various geographic regions based on the points of the compass. The distinctions often relate to the type of economic activity the people are engaged in or are based on cultural traits such as the variations of Christianity or the branches of the Indo-European language.

Since the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, Eastern Europe has been transitioning from Communist governments to democratic governments with capitalist-style economies. Some countries have made this transition more easily than others. Many of the more progressive countries have been accepted into the EU. Other countries continue to struggle to establish stable democratic governments and a growing economy.

The breakup of the former Yugoslavia is an excellent example of how cultural forces shape geographic areas. The Slavic region that makes up former Yugoslavia was separated through nationalism and strong devolutionary forces. The largest state of Serbia dominated the breakup with the push for a Greater Serbia for Serbs only. The result was the creation of seven smaller states following a nation-state design.

10.7 ATTRIBUTIONS AND REFERENCES

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PART XI

RUSSIA

11.1 IDENTIFYING THE REGION

Russia is the largest country in physical area, almost twice the size of the United States. The country extends from its European core, where most of the population live, across the Ural Mountains into Siberia and the Russian Far East, where residents have more economic and social connections with China than Europe. A train journey from St. Petersburg to Vladivostok, the western and eastern termini of the Trans-Siberian Railway, takes about one week of constant travel. No paved highways cross the entire country. The central part of Russia is so big that it requires eight time zones, with an additional time zone for Kaliningrad's European enclave, near Poland. Russia includes world-class cities such as Moscow, with its many billionaires and famous Red Square; vast territories of the Arctic north; extensive forests of Siberia; grain farms rivaling those in Kansas; and mountain communities in the Caucasus. Russia has a complicated history of monarchy and totalitarianism, abundant natural resources, extremes of wealth and poverty, and a slowly declining population. It is a dynamic country transitioning from a Communist state to part of the global economy.

Russia is located in both Europe and Asia. The Ural Mountains are considered the separation boundary for the two continents. The Asian side of Russia is physically bordered to the south by Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and China, with an extremely short border shared with the tip of North Korea. The Amur River creates a portion of the boundary with China. The Pacific Ocean is to the east with the Bering Strait separating Russia from North America. The Arctic Ocean creates the entire northern boundary of Russia, stretching from Norway to Alaska. The Arctic Ocean can be ice-covered for much of the long winter season. Russia is a northern country with most of its physical area above the latitude of 50 degrees north. The Arctic Circle runs the entire length through the middle of the northern half of the country.

The boundaries of European Russia include its southern border in the Caucasus Mountains with Georgia and Azerbaijan. This portion of Russia protrudes south of 50 degrees latitude. The Caucasus Mountains are the tallest mountain chain in Russia and Europe. The Black Sea and the Caspian Sea create natural boundaries on either side of the Caucasus Mountains. The main borders with Eastern Europe include the large countries of Ukraine and Belarus. Farther north, Russia borders Latvia, Estonia, Finland, and Norway. European Russia is much smaller than its Asian counterpart but is the dominant core area for the country anchored by Moscow's capital city.

11.2: PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE REGION

Russia's massive expanse exhibits various physical environments, such as tundras, steppes, mountains, and birch forests. Type D (continental) climates dominate most countries and characterize large landmasses such as Eurasia and North America. Land in the center of a vast continent, far from the oceans' moderating effects, tends to heat up rapidly in the summer and cool down rapidly in the winter. These areas are known for hot summers and cold, harsh winters. Northern Russia borders the Arctic Ocean, and frigid air masses from the Arctic swoop south across Russia each winter. Moreover, Russia's northerly latitude means that it experiences a short growing season and has never been an agricultural superpower; the country usually has to import grain to feed its people. Mountain ranges to the south block summer rains and warm air masses that would otherwise come from South and Central Asia, thus creating deserts and steppes in southern Russia.

Most of Russia's population live in the European part of the

country on the Eastern European Plain, also known as the Western Russian Plain, the most agriculturally productive land in Russia. The eastern edge of the plain is marked by the Ural Mountains, a low-lying mountain chain (about 6,000 feet) that crosses Russia from the Arctic Ocean to Kazakhstan. The mountains contain deposits of coal, iron ore, and precious and semiprecious stones and are considered the boundary between Europe and Asia. To the south of the Russian Plain is another mountain range, the Caucasus Mountains, which bridges the Caspian and Black Seas. East of the Urals is the West Siberian Plain, the Central Siberian Plateau, the Yakutsk Basin, the Eastern Highlands, and the Central Asian Ranges. Russia has abundant natural resources, such as petroleum, natural gas, and forest products.

Environmental Problems

Each region of the Russian republic has its environmental issues. With all its industrial activity and vast urban expanses, Moscow's core region introduces sewage and chemicals to the country's waterways, contributing to severe water pollution. The same water pollution is found east of the Ural Mountains – and in that region's waterways – because of the industrial cities found there. Moscow and the ring of industrial cities surrounding it have seen a dramatic increase in automobile use since 1991, contributing to air pollution. Russia is blessed with

abundant natural resources, but significant environmental damage has been the price of exploiting and extracting those resources. Massive oil spills have occurred in the taiga and tundra areas, where the lack of safety management has increased environmental damage during oil exploration and development. The taiga is the broad expanse of evergreen or boreal forests in the north just south of the tundra in North America, Europe, and Asia. The taiga is most common in type D climates and is one of the most massive biomes on earth. The taiga is the largest biome in Russia. Mining and smelting processes in Siberian cities have added to the region's air and water pollution. These ecosystems are somewhat fragile and will take years to recover from such damage.

Water pollution from the rivers extends into the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea, and other water bodies. Lake Baikal, described as the largest freshwater lake globally, was pristine, but pollutants have entered its waters from nearby industrial activity. Increased pollution in the Black and Caspian Seas and overfishing, the lack of fishing regulations, and the lack of law enforcement have resulted in the devastation of fish populations such as the caviar-producing sturgeon. The Arctic waters of the Barents Sea off the northern coast of Russia have been a dumping ground for nuclear waste products and expended nuclear reactors from naval vessels. The consequences of this nuclear pollution are not widely known or studied. Many aging nuclear reactors from the Soviet-era

dot the landscape, and they will need to be decommissioned at some point, adding to the nuclear waste issues. Various regions in Siberia were used for nuclear testing and are also contaminated with nuclear radiation.

Russia has also been a country that might benefit from a warming planet. As the Arctic Ocean continues to melt and has a shorter freeze season, access to oil reserves within the region becomes easier to access. Much of these untapped oil reserves reside along Russia's continental shelf.

11.3 HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE REGION

The Russian Empire gradually conquered the territory that makes up the Russian Federation as the country expanded from its political core around Moscow/St. Petersburg during the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. By the end of the eighteenth century, Czarina Catherine the Great had expanded Russia to include the area that is now Ukraine (the north side of the Black Sea), the northern Caucasus Mountains, and Alaska (which Russia later sold to the United States). During the next century, the Russian Empire expanded eastward into Central Asia (what is now Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and the other Central Asian republics), southward into the rest of the Caucasus region, and westward into Poland and Finland. In the twentieth century, when the Russian Empire disintegrated and was replaced by the Soviet Union (the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or USSR), the central government continued to expand and strengthen its control of the vast area from Eastern Europe to the Pacific Ocean.

Both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union were imperial powers. In other words, these governments ruled a large variety of ethnic groups in distant places: people who spoke many languages, worship different gods in different ways, had various skin and hair colors, and who did not consider themselves to be Russian. Although the British and some other European powers had an arguably more difficult task of ruling empires that were widely scattered around the world, Russia had the largest empire in terms of territory. Ruling this diverse, immense empire was an incredible challenge.

The czars ruled this empire with Russification and the sword. Russification refers to minimizing cultural differences, turning all Russian subjects into Russians, or making them as Russian as possible. As they were all subject to the Russian czars, people were taught the Russian language and were encouraged to convert to Russian Orthodoxy. Russification was not very successful, and the farther people were from Moscow, the less likely they were to be Russified. When the Soviets took over the Russian Empire, millions of Muslims still lived in Central Asia, on the Crimean peninsula of southern Ukraine, in the Caucasus Mountains, and elsewhere.

The Soviets took a different tack when it came to taming the diversity of the empire. Instead of emphasizing unity under the Russian czar, the Russian language, and the Russian Orthodox religion, the Soviets decided to organize, and thus try to control, the diversity of ethnic groups found in the Soviet

Union. They chose some of the major groups and established Soviet Socialist Republics that corresponded to these major groups. Thus they created the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (Uzbek SSR), the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic (Kazakh SSR), the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (Ukrainian SSR), and a different republic for each of fourteen ethnic groups, plus the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. About eighty-five other ethnic groups were not given their republics, although some were allocated regions within the Russian Republic. In theory, each of the Soviet Socialist Republics was an independent state choosing to ally with the Soviet Union. In practice, of course, these republics were part of a totalitarian, centrally ruled state with far fewer autonomous rights than states in the United States.

The creation of these republics strengthened particular ethnic/national identities and weakened others. There had not been a fully developed Uzbek national identity before the formation of the Uzbek SSR. The same was true for the Kazakh SSR, the Turkmen SSR, and others. Although people in a particular area might have spoken the same language, they did not think of themselves as belonging to a nation of fellow Uzbeks, Kazakhs, or Turkmen until they were put into one by the Soviet rulers. In 1991, when the Soviet Union collapsed, these Soviet Socialist Republics were able to declare their independence from Russia, and the national identities fostered during the Soviet era came to fruition.

At the same time that the Soviets were organizing minority ethnic groups into republics, they were also sending ethnic Russians to live in non-Russian parts of the Soviet Union. Some were sent by force – such as Russians sent to prison camps in Siberia and stayed in the area after being eventually freed. Other Russians were sent around the empire to work in factories, power plants, and other industries, or they were sent to help administer the government. By sending Russians to the Soviet Union’s far reaches, the Russian government hoped to consolidate its control over the various republics and dilute minority ethnicities’ strength. This policy also had unintended consequences: when the Soviet Union collapsed after 1991, and the various republics became independent countries, they had to deal with sizable Russian minorities. For example, nearly as many ethnic Russians lived in Kazakhstan (38 percent) as ethnic Kazakhs (40 percent) at the time of its independence. In the twenty years since then, many Russians moved to Russia from the former Soviet republics. In 2010, Kazakhstan’s population was only about 24 percent ethnic Russian.

The Russian Federation was created with eighty-three federal subjects: two autonomous federal cities; forty-six provinces (oblasts) and nine territories (krais) that function in the same way and are the most common type of federal unit; twenty-one republics; four autonomous districts (okrugs); and one autonomous oblast. Moscow and St. Petersburg are the two

federal cities that function as their units. The oblasts and kraia each have a governor appointed by the central government and a locally elected legislature. The governorship was an elected position in the 1990s, but President Vladimir Putin changed the structure to strengthen the central state's power. The republics, designed to be home to specific ethnic minorities, are allowed to have their constitutions and governments and select an official language that will be used besides Russian, but they are not considered independent countries with the right to secession. The autonomous districts were also formed for ethnic minorities and are administered either by the central state or by the province or territory in which they are located. The only autonomous oblast was created in the 1930s to be a home for Jews in the Russian Far East, but only about 1 percent of the population remains Jewish today.

The USSR and the Russian Federation

The czars built the Russian Empire over a few hundred years. However, the economic and political systems of the Russian Empire were not sustainable in the modern era. The vast majority of the population were poor, and most were landless peasant farmers – and in a place with short growing seasons, farming was not an easy path to riches. A small elite group made political decisions. At the dawn of the twentieth century,

one hundred years after the Industrial Revolution swept through Great Britain and Western Europe, Russia remained an agricultural country and had not yet begun large-scale industrialization. Outside of the aristocracy, few supported Russia's status quo, and there was a widespread desire for a new political system and government.

However, no one could agree on what a new government would look like. In the aftermath of the First World War, a civil war erupted in Russia. During these turbulent times, the last czar, Nicholas II, was forced from office, and he and his family were executed. The most powerful group battling Russia's control was a Communist group called the Bolsheviks, which meant the "larger group." Other groups, including the "smaller group," the Mensheviks, lost the civil war. The Bolshevik leader was Vladimir Lenin, and in 1917 he and his supporters embarked on a quest to turn Russia into a Communist state.

The capital city was moved back to Moscow from St. Petersburg, where it had been since the time of Czar Peter the Great in the eighteenth century. St. Petersburg's name was changed to Petrograd and then Leningrad in honor of Vladimir Lenin, as the atheist Soviets did not want any references to Christian saints. The Russian Empire's entire territory was turned into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The Russian people traded a monarchy

for a Marxist totalitarian state (see Marxism’s explanation in Section 3.2.1 “Marxist-Leninist Central Planning”).

The Soviet Union lasted from 1922 to 1991. Josef Stalin, the Soviet dictator who took over after Lenin, was incapacitated in 1922 (and died in 1924). He was a ruthless leader who murdered his way to power and killed or exiled anyone who got in his way. Stalin is famous for initiating economic plans that helped move Russia from a poor, agrarian state to a large, industrial superpower. He pushed for rapid industrialization, eradicating family farms instead of large communal farms, the end of personal ownership of land or businesses, and the dramatic weakening of organized religion. All these changes came at a high price. During his reign of terror, an estimated thirty million people lost their lives. The forced collectivization of agriculture brought about a devastating famine in 1932–33, in which between six and eight million people starved to death or were killed outright, many of them in Ukraine. Stalin led periodic purges of his perceived political enemies. The largest of these is known as the Great Purge. At that time (1936–38), about one million so-called enemies of the state were executed. More people lost their lives under Stalin than in all the concentration camps of Adolf Hitler’s Nazi regime. The full extent of Stalin’s purges of his people may never be fully known. Stalin’s rule ended in 1953 when he reportedly died of natural causes. However, some historians believe his close associates poisoned him.

Marxist-Leninist Central Planning

The Soviet Union espoused the philosophies of Karl Marx, a nineteenth-century German theorist. Marx wrote that all political and economic life could be understood as a struggle between the various classes in society. People who adhere to Marx's philosophy are called Marxists, and the Soviet version of Marxism is called Marxism-Leninism. In Marxist thought, capitalism is an oppressive economic system in which the working class (the proletariat) is oppressed by the bourgeoisie (the wealthy middle class). Marxists believe that the proletariat should revolt, rise against the bourgeoisie, take the property away from the rich, and give it to the government to control it for the benefit of the ordinary people. Ultimately, a pure Communist system would result, with no social or economic classes, no private property, no rich people, and no poor people. In real life, governments that adopt these ideas practice socialism and are said to be socialist.

As a socialist state, the Soviet Union did not include open markets. The Soviet Union was a command economy, in which economic decisions were made by the state and not left to the market to decide. During the Soviet era, for example, industrial production was planned by the central government. The government would decide what would be produced, where it would be produced, the quantity produced, the number of workers who would produce it, where the raw

materials would come from, and how the final product would be distributed. By mobilizing the entire country to work toward common goals, the USSR achieved the rapid industrialization that it so desired. However, the Soviets underestimated the power and efficiency of free-enterprise capitalism, and their socialist system was undermined by waste, fraud, and corruption.

Another main economic feature of the Soviet Union was collectivized agriculture. The Soviet leaders did not want individual, capitalist farmers to become rich and threaten their economic system. Nor did they want thousands of small, inefficient farms when the country was perpetually unable to feed itself. Instead, they decided to streamline agricultural production into large farm factories. All the farmland in each area was consolidated into a government-owned joint operation. Some collective farms were run by the state, while private cooperatives ran others. During the transition period to collective farming, individual farmers were forced to give up their land, animals, farm equipment, and farm buildings and donate them to the collective farm in their area. The state also demanded a high percentage of the crops produced. At times, the government collected the entire harvest, not allowing seed crops to be held for the following season. This brought about widespread famine in 1932–33. Collectivized agriculture remained the norm in the Soviet Union until its dissolution in 1991 and even afterward in some areas.

The Cold War

From the end of World War II in 1945 until the USSR collapsed in 1991, the Soviet Union and the United States competed in the global community to control labor, resources, and world power. Each side attracted allies, and most countries were on either the United States or the Soviet Union; very few remained neutral. This era, known as the Cold War, did not involve direct military armed conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, but it transformed the world into a political chessboard, with each side wanting to block the other side from gaining ground. Whenever the Soviets would ally with a particular country, the United States was right to counter the move. Wars, armed conflicts, sabotage, spying, and covert activities were Cold War methods. Both sides stockpiled as much deadly weaponry as possible, including nuclear warheads and missiles. They also competed in the race to put people in outer space.

The Cold War led to wars fought in Vietnam, Korea, Grenada, Afghanistan, Angola, and the Middle East, with the Soviet Union funding one side and the United States. Secret wars or guerilla wars with secret agents and political assassinations were fought in Cuba, Nicaragua, Chile, Guatemala, Mozambique, Laos, Cambodia, and a host of other third-world countries. The Cold War divided the world into two main camps, each with many nuclear weapons. The Iron

Curtain sectioned off eastern Europe, and the Berlin Wall divided Berlin, Germany. These physical barriers divided the communist countries of Eastern Europe with the capitalist democracies of Western Europe. Germany itself was divided into two separate countries.

Various Soviet dictators came to power and died in office before the end of the Cold War. The last Soviet leader was Mikhail Gorbachev, who assumed power in 1985. The US president at the time was Ronald Reagan. During the 1980s, the United States was outspending the Soviets militarily, and its economy was growing at a much faster rate than that of the USSR. Simultaneously, the Soviets were engaged in a costly war in Afghanistan, and their economy was faltering and in danger of collapse. Gorbachev realized that reforms had to be implemented to modernize the Soviet system: political life needed to be more open so that people would feel ownership of the country, and the economy needed to be restructured. Gorbachev implemented perestroika (restructuring of the economy with market-like reforms) and glasnost (openness and transparency of all government activities). The restructuring exposed fundamental problems in the economy, and by 1990 the Soviet economy was in worse shape than ever before.

The end came in 1991: the Soviet Union collapsed when fourteen of the Soviet republics broke away and declared their independence. At this point, the Soviet state was too weak to

prevent it. All the republics, including Russia itself (now called the Russian Federation), became independent countries. The only territories that did not achieve independence were the smaller republics and autonomous regions within the Russian Federation's boundaries. The Iron Curtain melted away seemingly overnight, and people were free to travel to and from the former Communist countries. The old Russian flag flew over the Kremlin – the seat of the Russian government – for the first time since Czar Nicholas II had been in power seventy-three years earlier. The Communist era of the Soviet Union and the Cold War was over.

The post-Soviet transition was filled with political, economic, and social turmoil. Boris Yeltsin, the first president of the new Russian Federation, ushered in a series of economic reforms that privatized state-owned enterprises. Russian leaders tried to reverse socialism rapidly through what they called “shock therapy,” which they knew would be painful but hoped would be brief. These reforms created a new class of capitalist entrepreneurs.

Once controlled by the political elite, wealth was now being shifted to the business elite, a pattern found in most capitalist countries. Many ordinary workers faced unemployment for the first time as the new owners of various companies trimmed unnecessary staff. Private ownership forced housing costs to skyrocket, and while families were generally allowed to keep the homes they already lived in, purchasing houses or

condominiums became out of reach for many people. The value of the ruble, Russia's currency, declined rapidly, and older people watched as their life savings evaporated overnight. Western goods were more easily accessible, and all kinds of consumer products became much more widely available than they were during the Soviet era. Bread lines and empty store shelves became distant memories as the former Communist state shifted over to capitalist democracy. Yeltsin became increasingly less popular as citizens became dissatisfied with corruption and the post-Soviet transition's high social costs. He resigned in 1999 and was replaced by Vladimir Putin.

Twenty-first Century Russia

A Russian style of capitalism replaced the social, political, and economic system of the Communist era with a growing market economy. The export of Russia's vast quantities of natural resources, such as oil, natural gas, and timber, to Europe and the rest of the world helped the country rebound from the economic collapse of the 1990s. Russia has benefited from the recent increase in energy prices, and oil, natural gas, metals, and timber account for more than 80 percent of exports and 30 percent of government revenues. However, Russia still needs to modernize its dilapidated manufacturing base to economically compete against the European Union, North America, or eastern Asia. During Vladimir Putin's

presidency (2000–2008), Russia witnessed substantial economic growth that inspired foreign investors to pump money into the Russian economy and catapulted Moscow into an investment haven and one of the wealthiest cities in the world. In 2008, Moscow claimed to have more billionaires than any other city in the world. Russia has re-established itself as a significant player globally, although much of its population still suffer from poverty and social problems.

Russia's population grew steadily during the Soviet era, except during famine or warfare, and the country underwent a rural-to-urban shift as farm workers moved to cities to labor in factories. However, when the USSR collapsed, Russia's population began a steep decline, falling from a peak of 149 million in 1991 to about 143 million in 2005. The trend of low birth rates began during the Soviet period. The population decline occurred because birth rates always declined during periods of economic and social crises as people delay or decide to have children. The country experienced exceptionally high death rates because of alcoholism, heart disease, and the social safety net collapse. Any time death rates surpass birth rates, a country's population will decline unless the difference is offset by immigration. Very high abortion rates also impacted Russia's birth rate: in 1992, there were 221 abortions in Russia for every 100 live births (Johnston's Archive). Although Russia's population has seemingly bottomed out, the only reason it is not continuing to decline is immigration from

the former Soviet republics. Russia still has a negative rate of natural increase.

To put Russia's demographic profile in context, its fertility rate was only about 1.5 in 2010, meaning that the average woman would have 1.5 children in her lifetime. This is below the 2.1 children each woman would need to have for the population to remain stable. The fertility rate in Russia is similar to that of countries in Europe (1.5) but lower than that of the United States (2.1) (Central Intelligence Agency). Life expectancy for Russian men is variously reported as sixty years up to sixty-three years, while women can expect to live seventy-three to seventy-five years. In Western Europe, life expectancies are about eighty years.

About 80 percent of Russia's population is ethnically Russian. The next largest group is Tatar (3.8 percent), a group that traditionally has spoken the Tatar language and practiced Islam. More than 150 ethnic groups are represented in Russia, including indigenous people of the Arctic who herd reindeer for a living. Each of the nationalities of the former Soviet republics has a presence in Russia, and because of its relatively strong economy, Russia (especially Moscow) is an immigration magnet for residents of those countries. Most of these groups have their language and cultural traditions.

The Russian Orthodox Church is the dominant religious denomination in Russia. For generations, it was the country's

official religion, and Russian people were automatically considered to be Orthodox, no matter what their personal beliefs. During the Soviet era, the government did much to weaken the church, including killing tens of thousands of priests, monks, and nuns and closing most churches. The state largely controlled the much smaller church that survived. Because of state-sanctioned atheism during the Soviet era, only 15 to 20 percent of Russia's population today actively practices Orthodoxy, although a much greater number claim to be Russian Orthodox Christians. Another 15 percent of the country's population practices Islam, especially in places such as the Caucasus region and the southern Ural Mountains, and about 2 percent practice other forms of Christianity, such as Catholicism and Protestantism (Central Intelligence Agency). Even though a minority of Russia's population practices Orthodoxy, the church has increased its influence since 1991 and often acts as an official church. A small percentage of the population are Buddhists, and various ethnic groups in Siberia and the Far East practice tribal religions and pagan rites.

The Russian Language

Like English, Russian is an Indo-European language. Russian is on the Slavic branch of the language tree and languages such as Polish, Ukrainian, and Serbo-Croatian. A relatively new language developed from a language called Old East Slavic

that was spoken around 1100 CE. Medieval Russian developed in the thirteenth century and modern literary Russian is usually traced back to the early nineteenth century. Russian uses the Cyrillic alphabet, which was developed from Greek. The Russian language is the official language of the Russian republic. With over one hundred languages used in the country, twenty-seven of them are officially recognized in various regions within the republic.

11.4 REGIONS OF RUSSIA

The Core Region

Most of Russia's population and its major industries are located west of the Ural Mountains on the Russian Plain. Known as Russia's geographic core, this includes the Moscow region, the Volga region, and the Ural Mountains region. Moscow, Russia's capital city, anchors a central industrial area that is home to more than fifty million people. Moscow has more than ten million residents, with about thirteen million in its metropolitan area, making it slightly smaller than the Los Angeles, California, metro area. A ring of industrial cities surrounding Moscow contains essential production centers of Russian manufacturing. During the Communist era, Moscow expanded from its nineteenth-century core (although the city dates from at least the twelfth century) and became an industrial city with planned neighborhoods. This world-class city has an extensive subway and freeway system that is expanding to meet current growth demands. Although rents, commodities, and domestic goods had fixed prices during the Communist era, the Soviet Union's collapse changed all that. Today Moscow is one of the most expensive places to live globally, with prices based on supply and demand. Many want

to live in Moscow, but it is financially out of reach for many Russians.

Russia's second-largest city, with a population of about five million, is St. Petersburg. Located on the Baltic Sea, it is western Russia's leading port city. The city was renamed Petrograd (1914–24) and Leningrad (1924–91) but today is often called Petersburg, or just “Peter” for short. Peter the Great built the city with European architects' help in the early eighteenth century to rival other European capitals, and he made it the capital of the Russian Empire. Named after St. Peter in the Bible (not Peter the Great), it is a cultural center for Russia and a significant tourist destination. It is also known for shipbuilding, oil and gas trade, manufacturing, and finance. Its greatest tragedy occurred when it was under siege for twenty-nine months by the German military during World War II. About one million civilians died of starvation or during the bombardment, and hundreds of thousands fled the city, leaving the city nearly empty by the end of the siege.

To the far north of St. Petersburg on the Barents Sea are Murmansk and Arkhangelsk's cities. Murmansk is a major military port for Russia's navy and nuclear submarine fleet. Relatively warm water from the North Atlantic circulates Norway to keep this northern port city reasonably free of ice. Arkhangelsk (which means “archangel”), used as a port for lumber exports, has a much shorter ice-free season than

Murmansk. Both of these cities are in Russia's far north, with long winters and exceedingly brief summers.

The Volga River flows through the core region of Russia, providing transportation, freshwater, and fishing. The Volga is the longest river in Europe at 2,293 miles, and it drains most of Russia's western core region. This river has been a vital link in Russia's transportation system for centuries and connects major industrial centers from the Moscow region to the south through extensive canals and other waterways. The Volga River flows into the Caspian Sea, and a canal links the Volga with the Black Sea through a connecting canal via the Don River.

At the eastern edge of Russia's European core lie the Ural Mountains, which act as a natural divide between Europe and Asia. These low-lying mountains have an abundance of minerals and fossil fuels, which make the Ural Mountains ideal for industrial development. The natural resources of the Urals and the surrounding area provide raw materials for manufacturing and export. The eastern location kept these resources out of the hands of the Nazis during World War II, and the resources themselves helped in the war effort. Oil and natural gas exploration and development have been extensive across Russia's core region and have significantly increased Russia's export profits.

The Eastern Frontier

In south-central Russia, East of the Urals is Russia's Eastern Frontier, a region of planned cities, industrial plants, and raw-material processing centers. The population is centered in two zones: the Kuznetsk Basin (or Kuzbass, for short) and the Lake Baikal region.

The Kuzbass is a coal, iron ore region, bauxite mining, timber processing, and steel and aluminum production industries. Central industrial cities were created across the Eastern Frontier to take advantage of these resource opportunities. The most important of these is Novosibirsk, the third-largest city in Russia after Moscow and St. Petersburg and home to about 1.4 million people. The city is not only noted for its industries, but it is also the region's center for the arts, music, and theater. It is host to a music conservatory and a philharmonic orchestra, a division of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and three major universities.

Agriculture, timber, and mining are the main economic activities in the eastern Lake Baikal region, which is more sparsely settled than the Kuzbass. Lake Baikal (400 miles long, 50 miles wide) holds more freshwater than all the US Great Lakes together and about 20 percent of all the liquid freshwater on the earth's surface. Its depth has been recently measured at 5,370 feet (more than a mile) – some of the

longest river systems in the world flow through the Eastern Frontier. The Irtysh, Ob, Yenisey, and Lena are the main rivers that flow north through the region into Siberia and the Arctic Ocean. To the east, the Amur River creates the border between Russia and China until it flows north into the Sea of Okhotsk. In addition to waterways, the Trans-Siberian Railway is the primary transportation link through the Eastern Frontier, connecting Moscow with Vladivostok's port city in the Far East.

Siberia

As a place name, Siberia refers to all Asian Russia east of the Ural Mountains, including the Eastern Frontier and the Russian Far East. However, in this and some other geography textbooks, Siberia describes only the region north of the Eastern Frontier that extends to the Kamchatka Peninsula. The word Siberia conjures up visions of a cold and isolated place, which is true. Stretching from the northern Ural Mountains to the Bering Strait, Siberia is larger than the entire United States but is home to only about fifteen million people. Its cities are located on strategic rivers with few overland highways connecting them.

Type D (continental) climates dominate the southern portion of this region, and the territory consists mainly of coniferous forests in a biome called the taiga. This is one of the world's

largest taiga regions. Type E (polar) climates can be found north of the taiga along the Arctic Sea coast, where the tundra is the primary physical landscape. No trees grow in the tundra because of the semi-frozen ground. Permafrost may thaw near the surface during the short summer season but is permanently frozen beneath the surface. On the eastern edge of the continent, the mountainous Kamchatka Peninsula has twenty active volcanoes and more than one hundred inactive volcanoes. It is one of the most active geological regions on the Pacific Rim.

Russia's vast northern region is sparsely inhabited but holds enormous natural resources such as oil, timber, diamonds, natural gas, gold, and silver. There are vast resources in Siberia waiting to be extracted, and this treasure trove will play an important role in Russia's economic future.

The Far East

Across the strait from Japan is Russia's Far East region, with Vladivostok's port (population about 578,000) as its primary city. Bordering North Korea and China, this Far East region is linked to Moscow by the Trans-Siberian Railway. Before 1991, Vladivostok was closed to outsiders and was an important army and naval base for the Russian military. Goods and raw materials from Siberia and nearby Sakhalin Island were processed here and shipped west by train. Sakhalin Island and

its coastal waters have oil and mineral resources. Industrial and business enterprises declined with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Today, the Far East is finding itself on the periphery of Russia's hierarchy of productivity. However, it has the potential to emerge again as a vital link to the Pacific Rim markets.

Southern Russia

In the southern portion of the Russian core lies a land bridge between Europe and Southwest Asia: a region dominated by the Caucasus Mountains. To the west is the Black Sea, and to the east is the landlocked Caspian Sea. The Caucasus Mountains, higher than the European Alps, were formed by the Arabian tectonic plate moving northward into the Eurasian plate. The highest peak is Mt. Elbrus at 18,510 feet. Located on the border between Georgia and Russia, Mt. Elbrus is the highest peak on the European continent and Russia's highest peak.

Most of this region was conquered by the Russian Empire during the nineteenth century and held as part of the Soviet Union in the twentieth. However, only a minority of its population is ethnic Russian, and its people consist of a constellation of at least fifty ethnic groups speaking a variety of languages.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Caucasus region has been the central location of unrest within Russia. Wars between Russia and groups in the Caucasus have claimed thousands of lives. Some of the Caucasus' non-Russian territories would like to become independent, but Russia fears its country's unraveling if their secession is allowed to proceed. To understand why the Russians have fought the independence of places such as Chechnya, but did not fight against other former Soviet states' independence in the Caucasus such as Armenia, it is necessary to study Russia's administrative structure itself.

Of the twenty-one republics, eight are located in southern Russia in the Caucasus region. One of these, the Chechen Republic (or Chechnya), has never signed the Federation Treaty to join the Russian Federation; in fact, Chechnya proposed independence after the breakup of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Although other territories to the south of Chechnya, such as Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, also declared their independence from Russia after 1991, they were never administratively part of Russia. During the Soviet era, those countries were classified as Soviet Socialist Republics, so it was easy for them to become independent countries when all the other republics (e.g., Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan) did so after 1991. However, Chechnya was administratively part of the USSR with no right to secession. After 1991, Russia decided that it would not allow territories

that had been administratively governed by Russia to secede and have fought wars to prevent that from happening. It feared the consequences if all twenty-one republics within the Russian Federation were declared independent countries.

Chechnya has fought against Russia for independence twice since the USSR's collapse. The First Chechen War (1994–96) ended in a stalemate, and Russia allowed the Chechens to have de facto independence for several years. However, in 1999, Russia resumed military action, and by 2009 the war was nearly over, and Chechnya was once more under Russia's control. Between twenty-five thousand and fifty thousand Chechens were killed in the war, and between five thousand and eleven thousand Russian soldiers were also killed (Wikipedia). In 2003, the United Nations called Grozny, Chechnya's capital, the most destroyed city on Earth. The reconstruction of Grozny has slowly begun.

Even before the recent wars, Chechnya had a problematic past. Throughout its history, it has been at the boundary between the Ottoman Empire, the Persian Empire, and the Russian Empire. Most people converted to Sunni Islam in the 1700s to curry favor with the Ottomans and seek their protection against Russian encroachment. Nevertheless, Chechnya was annexed by the Russian Empire. During Soviet leader Josef Stalin's reign of terror, more than five hundred thousand Chechens were loaded on train cars and shipped to

Kazakhstan. Nearly half were killed when they reached Kazakhstan.

Transcaucasia

The independent countries of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan make up the region of Transcaucasia. Although they are independent countries, they are included in this chapter because they have more ties to Russia than Southwest Asia's region to their south. They have been inextricably connected to Russia ever since the Russian Empire annexed them in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and they were all former republics within the Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, these three small republics declared independence and separated from the rest of what became Russia.

Geographically, these three countries are located on the border between the European and Asian continents. The Caucasus Mountain range is considered the dividing line. The region known as Transcaucasia is generally designated as the southern portion of the Caucasus Mountains area.

Georgia's country has a long history of ancient kingdoms and a golden age, including invasions by the Mongols, Ottomans, Persians, and Russians. For a brief three years – from 1918 to 1921 – Georgia was independent. After fighting an

unsuccessful war to remain free after the Russian Revolution, Georgia was absorbed into the Soviet Union. Since it declared independence in 1991, the country has struggled to gain a stable footing within the world community. Unrest in the regions of South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Adjara (where the populations are generally not ethnic Georgian) has destabilized the country, making it more challenging to engage in the global economy. Russia and Georgia had a military conflict in 2008 when Russian troops entered the South Ossetian region to support its move toward independence from Georgia. Georgia considered South Ossetia to be a part of Georgia and called the Russians an occupying force. Many other countries, including the United States, condemned Russia for their action. Russian troops pulled out of Georgia but supported the independence of South Ossetia and Georgia's westernmost region of Abkhazia. Neither South Ossetia nor Abkhazia is considered independent states by most of the world's countries.

A democratic-style central government has emerged in Georgia, and economic support has been provided by international aid and foreign investments. The country has made the switch from the old Soviet command economy to a free-market economy. Agricultural products and tourism have been Georgia's main economic activities.

In 2010, to the south of Georgia, Armenia had a population of only about three million in a physical area smaller in size than

the US state of Maryland. It is a country with its distinctive alphabet and language and was the first country to adopt Christianity as a state religion, an event traditionally dated to 301 CE. The Armenian Apostolic Church remains the country's central religious institution, and the Old City of Jerusalem in Israel has an Armenian Quarter, an indication of Armenia's early connection with Christianity.

The small landlocked country has experienced invasions from every empire that controlled the region throughout history. The country's geographic area decreased when the Ottoman Empire took control of western Armenia, and that region remains a part of Turkey to this day. A bitter conflict between Turks and Armenians during World War I resulted in the systematic deaths of as many as a million Armenians. This genocide continues to be commemorated annually on April 24, the traditional date of the Armenian Martyrs' Day, but Turkey still denies the events were genocide.

Like the other former Soviet republics, Armenia has shifted from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. Before independence in 1991, Armenia's economy had a manufacturing sector that provided other Soviet republics with industrial goods to exchange raw materials and energy. Since then, its manufacturing sector has declined, and Armenia has fallen back on agriculture and financial remittances from the approximately eight million Armenians living abroad to support its economy. These remittances, along

with international aid and direct foreign investments, have helped stabilize Armenia's economic situation.

Azerbaijan is an independent country to the east of Armenia, bordering the Caspian Sea. It is about the same size in area as the US state of Maine. This former Soviet republic has a population of more than eight million in which more than 90 percent follow Islam. Azerbaijan shares a border with the northern province of Iran, which is also called Azerbaijan. Part of Azerbaijan is located on the western side of Armenia and is separated from the rest of the country.

Located on the Caspian Sea shores, Baku is the capital of Azerbaijan and is the largest city in the region, with a population approaching two million. During the Cold War era, it was one of the top five largest cities in the Soviet Union. The long history of this vibrant city and the infusion of oil revenues have given rise to a metropolitan center of activity that has attracted global business interests. Wealth has not been evenly distributed in the country, and at least one-fourth of the population still lives below the poverty line.

Azerbaijan is rich in oil reserves. Petroleum was discovered here in the eighth century, and hand-dug oil wells produced oil as early as the fifteenth century. Since the Industrial Revolution, the rising value of petroleum for energy increased the industrial extraction of oil in Azerbaijan. At the end of the nineteenth century, this small country produced half the oil in

the world. Oil and natural gas are the country's main export products and have been central to its economy. Vast oil reserves are located beneath the Caspian Sea, and offshore wells with pipelines to shore have expanded throughout the Caspian Basin. As much as the export of oil and natural gas has been economic support for the country, it has not been without costs to the environment. According to US government sources, local scientists consider parts of Azerbaijan to be some of the world's most devastating environmental areas. Dangerous air, soil, and water pollution exist due to uncontrolled oil spills and the heavy use of chemicals in the agricultural sector.

11.5 SUMMARY

Russia is a vast country that crosses the boundary between Europe and Asia. It has abundant natural resources, continental and arctic climates, mountains, plains, and large river systems.

Russia's vast size has made it challenging to govern, both for the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. Each government dealt with size and cultural diversity in different ways.

Both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union were empires—that is, they were large countries in which Russian political control dominated the many peoples of various cultures and ethnicities within its boundaries.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was founded through a violent rebellion and civil war. It was ruled by the Bolshevik party, a socialist group led by Vladimir Lenin. The second leader of the USSR, Josef Stalin, was renowned for the millions of people he killed as he consolidated his power and sought economic growth for his country.

The USSR was a command economy, in which the central state made economic decisions. The economic objectives of

the early leaders included rapid industrialization and agricultural collectivization.

The Soviet economy was ultimately corrupt and inefficient, along with other problems, led to the unraveling of the Soviet Union in 1991. The reforms of the final Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, were not enough to prevent its collapse.

The early post-Soviet years were rapid privatization, immense wealth for a small few, economic hardship for most, and the social safety net's disappearance.

Since 1999, Russian President Vladimir Putin has strengthened Russia's economy and consolidated the power of the central state.

Most Russians live in the western part of the country near Moscow, and other large population centers are also located in the country's European core. There are a few industrial cities in the Eastern Frontier region, but most of Russia east of the Urals is a vast wilderness.

Southern Russia, the Caucasus Mountains region, is the country that has caused Moscow's most unrest. Non-Russian groups such as the Chechens would like to be independent, but Russia has engaged in warfare to prevent them from seceding.

The countries of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan were once

part of the USSR but are now independent states. They are south of the Russian border, in the southern Caucasus Mountains. These countries are not without their challenges, as they are influenced both by Russia and by the Middle East to their south. They are home to significant components of Muslims and Christians and a variety of ethnic groups. While Armenia is the poorest of the three countries, Georgia and Azerbaijan have some wealth from petroleum exports.

11.6 MAPPING RUSSIAN EXPANSION TO THE SEA

Discover when and how Russia acquired territory between 1553 and 1914 to become the largest country in the world.

Learning Outcomes

- Trace the expansion of the Russian Empire through time and space.
- Identify and explain the underlying causes of Russian expansion.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You

can view it online here:

<https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/worldgeography/?p=523#h5p-9>

11.7 ATTRIBUTIONS AND REFERENCES

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